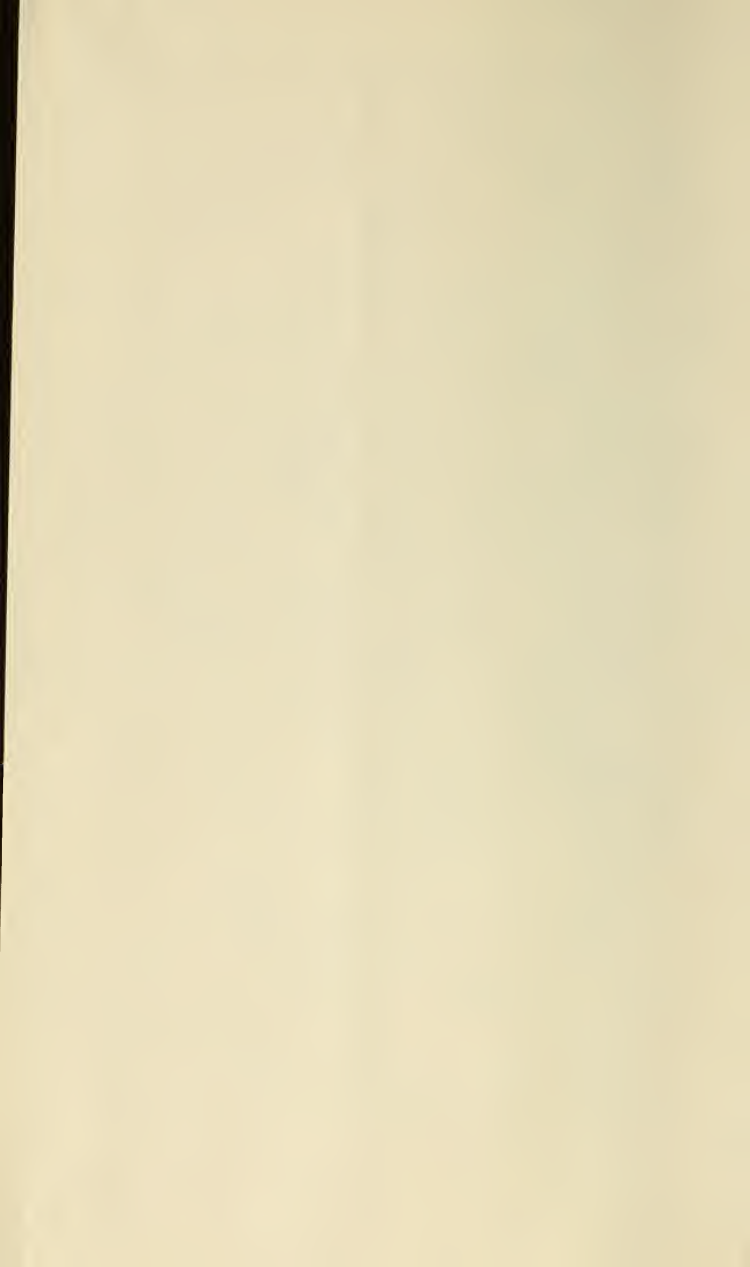


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# ANTHROPOLOGY;

OR,

## THE SCIENCE OF MAN:

IN ITS

BEARING ON WAR AND SLAVERY,

AND ON ARGUMENTS FROM

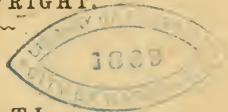
THE BIBLE, MARRIAGE, GOD, DEATH, RETRIBUTION, ATONEMENT AND  
GOVERNMENT, IN SUPPORT OF THESE AND  
OTHER SOCIAL WRONGS.

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

TO A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

BY HENRY C. WRIGHT.



CINCINNATI:

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ERRATUM.—In 16th line from the bottom, on page 21, for “how men feel and act,” read “how *we would have* men feel and act.”

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I SHALL make no apology for the opinions advanced in the following letters. I believe they are true; and no man should ever deprecate the displeasure of any being, for uttering what he thinks to be truth. The approbation of no being is worth the sacrifice of truth and duty. No one, who is familiar with the efforts made during the past twenty-five years, in this country and in Europe, to abolish intemperance, slavery, war and other social wrongs, can reasonably wonder at the positions I have taken, or question the propriety of their publication. Outrages upon man's physical and social nature have been perpetrated, under the sanctions of the Bible and of God, until the authority of that book, and the very name of God, have been made towers of defense to slavery, war and every violation of justice and equity. How shall these arguments, in support of such outrages upon human nature, be met? It seems to me a waste of time and energy, to attempt to argue the right or wrong of war or slavery from the Bible, or from God; they are violations of self-evident truth, and no power in the universe is competent to impose on man an obligation to kill, or to enslave his brother. Whoever says the Author of our being may justly instigate man to take the life of man, for any cause, is mistaken; simply because such an act is an outrage upon the laws under which he placed us.

WHAT IS MAN?—Shall we go to God, or to man for an answer? To discover the nature of a rose, we go to the flower itself; so, to learn the nature, relations and duties, of man, we must go to man, and no where else. The only way to consult God respecting the rose, is to inquire into its nature and its relations to the elements on which it depends for existence; and the only way to inquire of God about man, is to investigate the fixed laws of his body and soul, and the relations which he bears to his fellow beings, and the duties that grow out of such relations. God communicates with

men, *only* through the nature he has given them. If this be true, as I have aimed to show, the doctrine of *arbitrary* revelation is a delusion ; and, of course, all arguments drawn from this source, whether from the Bible, the Koran, the Shaster, or any other book supposed to contain such a revelation from God, must be erroneous, when arrayed against the divine record in the social and physical nature of every human being.

From all readers of the following pages, I solicit a careful and kindly perusal. Let each judge for himself or herself, whether the views I have expressed respecting the *Bible, Marriage, God, Death and Atonement*, be in accordance with truth and justice. I feel no interest in speaking, on these subjects, aside from their bearing on the relations and duties of man to man. Man owes no duties to his Maker aside from those which he owes to his fellow beings. And he, who most faithfully does his duty to the latter, most truly serves the former. I have prepared and published this work mainly with a view to meet the wants of those whose minds are distressed by arguments drawn from the bible and from God, in favor of what they feel and know to be unjust. The lives of thousands are rendered miserable by a constant warfare in their minds between their humanity and their religion, between the known facts of their existence, and what they are taught to love and worship as God. God and the Bible, as they are regarded by Christendom, are felt and known, by multitudes of the purest spirits of the age, to be at war with natural justice and affection. They are made miserable by the struggle within them. Their veneration for the Bible is at war with their natural affections and sympathies, and with their sense of justice and equity. Such have only to learn to distinguish between truth and falshood, fact and fiction, the substance and the shadow, to find peace and rest. To all such I would say, perhaps you may find some useful suggestions in the following pages, from the deep and bitter experience of one who has been through this fiery ordeal.

The following extract is from a letter of thrilling interest, giving the experience of the writer in reference to reading the Bible in childhood.

“ I made an attempt to read the Bible. But Oh ! what a falling off was there ! from my previous reading. This great book, I had heard so much about, after a few things were taken out ( I refer to the Old Testament ), I was forced to confess, in my inmost heart,

was wearisome and unsatisfactory. I went to it with my mind thirsting for knowledge, longing to be led up to the highest and holiest. Its fables I tried to think were only too deep for my comprehension; but, the more I considered them, the more coarse they appeared, without one gleam of a lofty spiritual significance; or to come down to earth, without one grain of common sense.

“I always had had intense sympathy, great tenderness for the life of any thing that lived, could not bear to see any thing killed, and the thought of any one shooting a beautiful, happy bird, made me sick with horror. Mother encouraged this as much as the necessity for killing some animals permitted, and to me this tenderness toward all living beings seemed worthy. At least I felt more of it when I was ‘good.’ While here (in the Bible) deeds worse than I had committed, and for which I had reproached myself bitterly, were said to have been done in obedience to the commands of God. God! That pure, glorious, all-forgiving, gracious, and loving being I had so adored! If it were true, I said threateningly to mother, ‘I would love him no longer. But oh, mother, it can’t be true, just as it is here put down, and I suppose I can’t understand what is meant.’ Still, let the meaning be what it would, the images used, pained and disgusted me. I longed to lay it aside after the history of creation, of Esther and some other things were read.

“However, the pure life of Christ, his beautiful teachings, his sufferings for the truth, so calmly, so nobly endured, excited my most enthusiastic worship and love. I said, ‘mother, it seems to me, Christ was better than his Father, God; may be he did not know so much, but he certainly was better according to the scripture account.’”

Here is an extract from a letter just received from another correspondent. “I do not believe any good or kind act was ever done, *merely* because the Bible, or Koran, or other books regarded as sacred, enjoined it as a duty. Every thing worthy of us as moral and intelligent agents, I believe, is accomplished, either wholly at the instigation of our natural and godlike feelings and affections, or because the injunction is in harmony with and appeals to them. We thus make these laws our standard of right at last, and the sooner mankind become conscious of it, and bring every thing *immediately* to this test, the sooner the world will be redeemed. Received as the Bible now is, it is only a stumbling block in the way of

human redemption. Weeks, months and years, are spent in trying to reconcile the godlike aspirations of the soul, to the great mixture of good and evil, presented in the Bible, before they can be acted upon. Thus it impedes the progress of honest inquiries after truth. But the mischief does not stop here. There are gross wrongs sanctioned by the Bible, and the infallibility claimed for it, furnishes the perpetrator of these wrongs with arguments that no believer in that doctrine can answer. Thus it is that hoary-headed crime is to day feeding upon the vitals of the church; thus it is that a book containing many sublime and beautiful truths, truths vitalizing and ennobling in their character, is converted into a crime rather than a blessing."

I would solicit special attention to what I have said on the BIBLE, MARRIAGE, GOD, and ATONEMENT. The extracts from my journal, kept during my travels in Europe, are made chiefly to illustrate the truth, that men have more respect for institutions than for human beings, and the absurdity and wickedness of exhausting the energies of our souls in love and devotion to God in heaven, while God in man is despised and outraged. But I send these letters forth, sincerely hoping that the truth contained in them may give rest and strength to some who are laboring for the purification and elevation of man.

HENRY C. WRIGHT.

CINCINNATI, February 26th, 1850.

# LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES RESPECTING MY VIEWS OF ARGUMENTS ADDUC-  
ED IN SUPPORT OF WAR AND SLAVERY.

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## LETTER I.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 14, 1850.

*Dear L.*—Thy last, to me, is before me. I have often pondered its contents. Thy anxiety for my welfare but endears thee to me. Do not let thy heart become strange toward me because I adopt and propagate opinions which, by thee, are considered erroneous; but let thy endeavors to reclaim me become earnest in proportion as I stray from what is loved and worshiped by thee as God. I have reason to know that the spirit, which pervades the popular church and clergy toward those whom they regard as aliens from their God and heaven, has no place in thy heart. Hatred and unkindness to the erring find no lodgment in thy nature. Pity and gentleness to those who, in our view, stray from the true and good, constitute the prominent characteristics of that religion which is summed up in love to man. That religion is thine—not in word and senseless rites, but in practical devotion to the welfare of mankind. Allow me to talk with thee, on subjects of all-absorbing interest to us both, with the freedom of one who owes to thy kindness and care what of life and usefulness remain to him on earth, and who counts thy acquaintance and friendship as among Heaven's choicest blessings.

Thy last, to me, closes with the request, "Tell me all about thyself." I will: thou hast a right to ask this of me—it is my privilege to comply with thy wishes. I know to what the request refers; for it closes a kind and earnest letter respecting my views of things recorded as facts in the Jewish Scriptures, and by the writers and by nearly universal Christendom, supposed to have been sanctioned by the Author of our being. I would gladly let thee, and all men, into the secrets of my soul, touching God, the Bible, Inspiration, Life, Death and Immortality. I have

nothing to conceal from any one touching my views of man—his nature, relations and destiny; for they are to me, and will, I think, ere long, be to all men, “the power of God and wisdom of God” to purify, elevate and save: and they cannot be rejected by any without injury to their moral nature.

“TELL ME ALL ABOUT THYSELF”! To do this, would be to tell thee much about every other human being; for, in the essentials of human nature, all are alike. Who am I? what am I? where am I? whence am I? whither am I going? are questions that are often suggested by the spirit that is in me. Every human being must often ask himself the same. In the development of our physical, intellectual and social powers, our characters may be infinitely diversified in minor things: but the essential laws and elements of human nature are the same in every human being. To tell thee what are the physical and social laws under which I exist, is to tell thee the laws under which every man exists.

*Where am I to go to learn “all about myself”?* Where, to learn the nature and relations of man? But one answer can be given: to myself—to man—and to nothing else. Where must I go to learn the nature of the rose and lily, of the fox and lion? Obviously, to the plants and animals themselves; and books are valuable, only so far as they give a true account of the nature of the plant or animal of which they treat. To decide if the account be true, we compare its statements with the known facts and habits of the plant, beast or bird, of which it speaks. If the book conflicts with the facts, we reject it; if it accords with the facts, we receive its statements as true—not because they are made in a particular book and by a certain man, but because they accord with facts.

So, to learn what man is, we must go to man; and we must receive the statements of any book, that professes to delineate his character and nature, as true or false, accordingly as they agree with known facts. All books must be brought to the test of nature—nature must never be tested by a book. As well test the visible by the invisible, the tangible by the intangible, a fact by fiction, the substance by the shadow. To learn the nature of the human body, thou wilt allow, we must go to the body itself. This is the only authoritative teacher in the science of physiology. Why send us out of ourselves to learn the nature of the soul? The soul of man is the only authoritative teacher respecting its own nature, operations, relations and duties.

*The sacredness of man is my theme.* To inspire man with affectionate respect for the person of man, to rescue him from



individual and governmental violence and to throw around his life and liberty the sanctions of absolute inviolability. has been the object of my life for twenty years. I must say that, in my view, man rises in dignity and sanctity the more I learn of his nature and relations: man, I mean, as he comes from the hand of his Creator—not as he comes from the hand of church or state, of priest or politician. I would enter into the temple of humanity (it is the most holy and beautiful of earth consecrated by its divine Architect) and there bow to the shrine of my Father and God. A feeling of tenderness and reverence toward human beings becomes deeper and stronger in my heart every hour. I daily shrink with greater horror to see human beings desecrated by war, slavery, death-penalty, drunkenness—or in any way, or by any being. I look upon all customs, institutions, books, governments and churches, as appendages to man. Man is an appendage to nothing, not even to his Creator: for that being has given to man, in an important sense, a distinct, separate and independent existence—a nature that has value in itself, and a sacredness that is ever-enduring and not to be destroyed by ignorance or vice, and which not even its Creator can justly violate while man is man. Man is an empire in himself, whose laws can never be justly infringed by any being—not even by him who established them, unless he changes our nature and relations. I love and reverence human beings as such; and, in proportion as these feelings become deeper and stronger, I find it more and more impossible for me to instigate or perpetrate any wrong or outrage upon the person or feelings of any human being, and easier and more desirable to suffer than to inflict suffering, to die than to kill. Do I estimate human beings too highly? Are they what I suppose them to be—the bright image of the Divinity, the manifestation of God in the flesh.

Here I stand; and, from this view of the absolute sacredness of the life and person of man, I estimate all social customs and institutions in Church and State—all books—all religious rites and ceremonies, and all that men call God—and, without hesitation, pronounce everything opposed to justice, goodness and expediency, which tends to the ruin or degradation of man in his physical, intellectual, social or moral nature. Let man be inviolate and sacred; perish everything that cannot exist without violence and death to him, physically or socially. The existence and government of our Creator never did, and never can, conflict with the doctrine of man's absolute inviolability: they guarantee it. Whatever necessarily involves his desecration and ruin has no rightful existence, call it by what name thou wilt.

In taking this view of man, and in my attempts to spread and carry it out, I stand in opposition to what existing religions and governments call God. (What they call God, says man, is an appendage to wealth, to a Sabbath, a meeting-house, an office, a title, a bible, a constitution, a church and governmental organization. He throws his sanction around these, and stones, crucifies, hangs, shoots and stabs, men, women and children, to death, and blows their bodies to atoms—swallows up towns and cities, and desolates the earth, making it to flow down with blood, and covers it with the mangled bodies of the victims of his wrath—to sustain them and preserve them from desecration. Men and women are burnt to ashes to maintain the sanctity of a book; they must be scourged, starved and hung, to preserve the holiness of the church and state; and the dearest sympathies and affections of human nature must be crushed to vindicate an observance or a dogma. At the same time, they say their God instituted these for the good of men! They being witnesses: their God creates observances and institutions for the protection of human life, and then slaughters men to preserve the institutions! He makes a garment to protect the body, and then tears the body to pieces to save the garment! He makes a hat to cover the head, and then knocks out the brains to save the hat!

To desecrate a Sabbath is, by Christendom, counted a greater insult to the God of the Sabbath, than to desecrate a man; to knock down a consecrated pulpit is a more heinous offense against the God of the meeting-house, than to knock out the brains of a man; to steal a sacramental cup, or a consecrated wafer, a higher sacrilege than to steal a man or woman; and to rob a meeting-house, than to plunder a cradle of its priceless contents.

Thou dost affectionately and earnestly entreat me to ponder well my pathway. I have; and long ago saw that, in taking the above view of man, I stood in a position hostile to what almost universal Christendom calls God. I long ago settled, in my mind, that no power in the universe was competent to impose on man an obligation to inflict death upon his brother. On the altar of the absolute inviolability of the person and life of man, I have long ago laid all books and institutions, and the being whom, in my childhood and youth, I was taught to love and worship as God. None but a monster of cruelty and injustice could ever authorize man to inflict death upon his brother. For, having sanctioned this last great outrage upon man, it would be useless to forbid minor offenses. Let death, at the hand of man, be once sanctioned by divine or human govern-

ment, and the only bond of social order and happiness is broken ; all enactments against theft, robbery, or any lesser outrage upon person or property, are void. He that may inflict death as a penalty, may inflict any injury short of death. The right to life underlies all other rights. Admit the right to violate that, and the right to violate all others follows.

*Dear friend*, from this position—that is, the absolute sacredness of the person and life of man—I wish, in the following letters, to look at War, Slavery, the Bible, God, Death, Immortality, Retribution, Atonement, Marriage, &c. As I intend to bring what I have to say within the compass of a pamphlet, I must necessarily be brief on many topics on which I touch. I shall view them solely in connection with the main question, *The Inviolability of the Life and Person of Man*. Thou art one with me on this question. Come, stand by me, and tell me if all I say be not the necessary result of the principle. I would we could agree in opinion ; but if we cannot, we will ever be one in mutual sympathy and affection.

HENRY C. WRIGHT.

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## LETTER II.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 15, 1850.

*Dear L.*—What is man? To man *alone*, as I have said, must I go for an answer. Whatever knowledge men of the past or present have of their nature, relations, obligations and duties, has been obtained from man himself—as all knowledge of the oak has been obtained from the tree itself.

Allow me to call thy attention to certain facts and principles of human life, which underlie my faith in God and my hopes of human progress and redemption.

1. *God works out all his purposes touching man, by the agency of fixed laws.* We are brought into existence and carried on through all the changes through which we pass, solely by organic, constitutional laws. Such, I mean, is the *design* of our Creator. This, with me, is a starting point. Am I right? Is this a fact? That it is, with regard to our physical nature, none will doubt. Air, food, water, sleep, are essential laws of physical life.

But where is our *social*, intellectual or spiritual, nature? Is this left to be the sport of arbitrary, ever-changing, or contra-

dictory laws? While all creation beneath man, and even man's physical nature, are subjected to laws thus wise and immutable, is our higher nature the victim of a government, whose laws are one thing to-day, and another and a contradictory thing to-morrow—which, in one age, require one course of social action, and, in another, an opposite course—which make that just and right in one generation, which they pronounce unjust and wrong in the next? No; I cannot believe it—canst thou? To admit it, would destroy the idea of a just, immutable, moral government, and make the Author of our being a mere creature of time and place.

Dost thou ask what I consider fixed laws of man's social or moral nature? I answer—*God* is one. Man can no more be without a conscious knowledge of God, than he can without a belief in his own existence. *Immortality* is another. My hope or expectation of an unending existence is no more a deduction of reason, nor a matter of arbitrary revelation, than my consciousness of present existence. God and immortality are wants of our nature as really as are food and air. *Society* is another. Love, marriage, forgiveness, kindness and self-sacrifice, are essential laws of our social nature. Life, liberty, happiness, personal responsibility, private judgment, are laws or elements of human nature.

2. *Every human being has a copy of the laws under which he or she exists.* Each one brings with him into life, a law by which that life is to be regulated. This is not doubted in reference to our physical nature. Where must that mother go to learn how to feel and act toward her babe? To an outward law? No; but only to her own maternal heart. Where shall that child go to learn how to feel and act toward its parents? Where shall that young man or woman go to learn how to choose a companion for life? To some arbitrary, outward law? No; but to their own hearts. To that law which speaks to us in every nerve, vein, artery and muscle, of our physical nature; and in every thought, sympathy and affection, of our souls, must we go to learn what to do to promote the purity, health, growth and elevation, of our whole nature; and how we are to treat ourselves and others.

What would be the condition of the human family if we must look beyond ourselves to learn our physical or social wants and how to supply them? Dark, desperate, unsettled, hopeless, indeed, is our condition. But justice and benevolence, as well as the known facts of our being, forbid the thought. As a birth-right inheritance, each has, in himself, a law which is written in

a language common to all, and which is all-sufficient to guide him to a knowledge of all the wants of his nature, and how to supply them, without injury to any other human being.

When, what and how much, he shall eat and drink; when and how much he shall sleep; and, as to the management of our physical nature generally, where is our only guide, and how come we by it? Thou wilt admit that it is in us, and that we brought it into existence with us, as a birthright inheritance from our Creator. It appears to me a no less obvious fact, that our social nature has in it a guide, which would be equally safe and unerring if man would follow it. Nature would regulate her own affairs if we would interpose no external obstacles. It seems to me a simple fact, that each one has a birthright, law or guide, to regulate the whole economy of his existence, and that none has need to go beyond himself to learn his relations and obligations.

3. *If these laws were allowed to work out their designed results, they would never bring pain or anguish to any human being.* So far as we are the work of God, we are perfect in soul and body; whatever deformities exist in either, they are the results of other causes. It is conceded that all the laws of our physical nature are ever working together to perfect the health and happiness of our bodies; and man would be brought into being and carried through this state into another, without physical pain, if the laws under which human bodies exist had been allowed to work out their designed and legitimate results, without any external impediment. Why assume that, as social beings, we are under external laws? We have reason to believe that the laws of our social nature would, of themselves, work out our social perfection and happiness, if they were not impeded in their operations by external causes.

As the laws under which the cedar exists, if allowed to work out their designed results, would make that tree exactly what it was designed to be, so, if the laws under which man exists had never been impeded, but had been allowed to work out their designed results, they had made him, in all respects, just what he was designed to be.

4. *Man cannot justly be held amenable to any law out of himself:* for the simple reason that we cannot justly be held responsible to a law of which we cannot obtain a perfect knowledge. To hold us responsible and make our destiny depend on obedience to laws given in a language and to persons necessarily unknown to us, and which must be subjected to the mistakes and perversions of translations by ignorant men, seems to me an act of injustice.

What wouldst thou say, should thy brother thus give laws to his children? One speaks Hebrew, one Greek and one English. Neither can understand the language of the other. The father speaks them all. He goes to the eldest and gives a law of life to him in Hebrew, to which he holds him and both the others responsible, but which only one can understand. The father then retires and leaves the others to get at the law as they best can. Yet, on their obedience to the laws thus given to but one, depends the claim of all to his love and favor.

Can such conduct be reconciled with justice in an earthly parent? How, then, can it ever seem just and right in our Heavenly Father? yet the common notions of inspiration and of man's responsibility to arbitrary law and penalty, place him in the same position. There are thousands of languages spoken among men. He knows them all. He would give a law of life to his children. He makes it known to a few in Hebrew and Greek, leaving all the rest to learn it as they may, and yet holds each and every man, in all ages throughout the world, amenable to it, and punishes them if they transgress. Not one in a million can get at the law in the language in which it was given; but a small portion can get at it in any language; and then only as it is subjected to the alterations and perversions of ambitious priests and sectarians.

Thus the only hope of the redemption of this world from war, slavery and sin, in all its forms, is suspended on the chance of putting a book into the hand of every individual of the race, and teaching him to read and understand it. Canst thou believe it? I cannot. It represents the Author of our being as a merciless tyrant, holding us amenable to laws of which we cannot obtain a correct knowledge. No; I cannot think this of the Being whom I love and worship as God.

The only law to which we can justly be held amenable, must be given to each and every man and woman, in a language which each can understand, for a copy of which we are not to depend on printers and booksellers, and for an exposition of which we are not to depend on priests, prophets or apostles. That law must be incorporated into our nature, a copy of which we must bring into life with us, and which is ever with us, sleeping and waking, and is ever speaking to us in tones of encouragement or rebuke, and which can never be suspended nor repealed. To this law, and to none other, are we responsible. These rules of life are as unchanging as our nature and relations; and outward arbitrary precepts and laws are obligatory only as they accord with these fixed and just laws of our nature.

Dear friend, my heart is deeply impressed with the importance of this subject. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? I can but ask this question for myself and for every human being. The answer comes up from the deep fountains of love and sympathy within us. In the soul is the true light that lightens every human being, kindled there by our Creator, and never to be extinguished by the hand of God or man. This is the only clear and steady light that can illuminate our pathway. I would call thee, and all the race, away from all outward laws and teachers of the past and present, to this light, this empire of God, in the body and soul of every man and woman. I can no more speak doubtingly here than I can of my own existence. I *know* that our Creator works out *all* his purposes respecting us, by the agency of fixed and holy laws; that these are written on the physical and social nature of each one; that, if unimpeded in their operations, they would work out the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual perfection and happiness of every individual of our race; and that we are amenable to these laws and to none other.

I am in the house of a friend, on the banks of the beautiful Ohio—the most beautiful of all rivers—and which is now twenty feet above low water mark (it sometimes rises sixty), and rolling a mighty flood past the hill on which my friend lives. The ground is covered with snow. I could not resist the temptation to join the children of the family and have a game of snow-ball and sliding down hill. I have just been on the sofa with the joyous group, telling them about my rambles in the Highlands, with “my wee darling,” and in London with thee. It is sweet to live in the heart of childhood. Why need we become old in spirit? We need not: we should not, if we lived less in the future and more in the present—less in an abstract Divinity and more in an ever-present humanity. The study of theology withers and blights the soul; the study of anthropology cheers and satisfies it, and makes it fresh and youthful. Indeed, the science of man is the true science of God. Before me is the record of a conversation I held with thee, as we sat together under the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral. How contemptible appeared that mighty fabric of stone compared to man, the true temple of the Holy One! There we asked the question, What is man? Our conclusion was, that it will take an eternity to answer that question and fully solve the grand problem of human life. Shall a being thus endowed, thus governed, thus destined and thus honored, by the Eternal Mind, always be desecrated by war, slavery, intemperance and every crime? It cannot be. A recuperative

power—a Redeemer—is at work in man, to rescue him from violence and death, and make him what he is designed to be—the bright, beautiful and loved incarnation of Him who is Love and Justice, and whose “dominion ruleth over all.” Thine ever,

H. C. W.

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### LETTER III.

PENMAEN, *Ohio, January 16, 1850.*

*Dear L.*—What is the Bible? As received, by universal Christendom, it is man’s only infallible rule of life, by which we are bound to regulate our feelings and actions. A Bible is laid before me: it is said, by thee and others, to be an *infallible* rule of faith and practice. Why am I required to receive it as such? Thy answer is, “Because it contains the only rule of right ever made known to man!” I say, “Let me read the book and see what is in it, and then I can tell whether it is an infallible rule of right.” “Oh, no,” is thy reply; “the question whether its teachings are right or wrong is not to be decided by the nature of its contents, but by the fact, that its authors were infallible men.” “But how,” I ask, “am I to determine whether they were thus infallible in their teachings, if not by the nature of what they taught? Surely, if they teach me that men can live without air or sleep, or that they may feel and act toward one another contrary to known facts and laws of their physical and social nature, thou couldst not ask me to believe them.”

“But,” thou sayest, “their teachings are not to be subjected to thy reason; man may not sit in judgment on the Bible.” “But,” I say, “the sole question at issue is, are all the teachings of the Bible true?” I say, “The writers were mistaken when they say it is natural and right to stone men to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath, and to kill children because their father sinned.” Thou sayest, “They could not have been mistaken, because they spake as they were moved by the true and good.” I say, “They put injustice for justice, that they teach that men may rightfully violate the laws of their social nature, and therefore they must have been mistaken.” Thy reply is, “That question is not to be settled by the nature of what they taught, but by the miracles and other positive proofs they gave of the absolute infallibility of their moral instruction.” “But,” I say, “if they array man against himself, as they do when they



array him against the facts and laws of his nature, no evidence could make me believe they were infallible." Could any miracle make me believe my body could be sustained without food? No; neither could any argument make me believe it ever was or ever can, be just for man to take the life of man.

Still thy reply is, "If man may sit in judgment on the Bible, he must bring it to some standard above the book. Where is that standard?" "In the soul of every man and woman. It is vain to say men are inspired by truth and justice, if their teachings and practice conflict with the law of justice, love, kindness, liberty and life, which are engraven upon our nature." "This," thou sayest, "is setting up nature above the Bible; God in the soul above God in the Bible." "True," I answer, "I do place the authority of nature above the authority of the Bible, the God of the soul above the God of the Bible. But the question is, does the Author of man's social nature speak in the Bible? If so, he says nothing there in opposition to the fixed laws of our social existence; and, if I find anything there contrary to self-evident truth, I reject it."

Thy inquiry is, "Are there any deeds recorded in the Bible, that conflict with natural justice and equity and with the facts of our social nature?" I believe there are, and will mention some of them. But will say in general that, any man, be he patriarch, prophet, or apostle, no matter what proof he gives of his infallibility, who fathers violations of nature's law upon the Author of nature, must be mistaken. "But," thou sayest, "if I admit that the writers were mistaken in one thing, I must reject the whole Bible." If thy meaning is, that thou must give up thy idea of plenary inspiration, and adopt the opinion that the writers of the Bible obtained their knowledge as other writers obtain theirs, I fully agree with thee. On the face of every page, the Bible demonstrates that its various writings were brought into existence as other writings are. The writers obtained their knowledge by an application of their powers to investigate the subjects about which they wrote. Moses obtained his knowledge as Lycurgus, Solon and Cromwell obtained theirs; Isaiah and Paul obtained a knowledge of what they taught, as Locke, Bacon and Whitfield acquired a knowledge of what they taught. But if thy meaning be, that we must reject, as untrue, all that is contained in the Bible, if we say the writers were mistaken when they tell us that deeds of injustice and cruelty are right and in accordance with the laws of our nature, I must dissent from thee entirely. I can no more doubt the truth of the laws of social life laid down by Jesus and the apostles, than I

can believe the record which says, the wars and penal code of the Jews accord with justice and mercy. The precepts of Christianity are not true because they were taught by Christ and the apostles, nor because they are recorded in the Bible: they were true and were inscribed on the souls of men before they were recorded in any book. The truth and beauty of those precepts, and my obligation to obey them, rest not on the character of the patriarchs, prophets, evangelists or apostles—but solely on the fact, they are in accordance with the rules of social life previously written on my social nature.

The law of love, forgiveness and self sacrifice, as it is written in our souls, and copied, expounded and carried out, in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, would, if obeyed, abolish all war, slavery, and all inflictions of sufferings and death on man by individuals and States. It would make man socially what he was designed to be. Thou mayest as well tell me I must refuse to eat bread, if I refuse to eat tobacco; that I must give up drinking water, if I cast away alcohol; that I must refuse to be kind and forgiving, if I refuse to be unkind and revengeful; and, that I must deny the existence of a God of justice and love, if I deny the existence of a God of injustice and wrath, as to tell me, if I say the writers of the Bible were mistaken in some things, I must believe they were mistaken in all they wrote. Such an argument is simply ridiculous, though often urged by sincere and honest spirits. Our moral and social nature rejects wrath, revenge, violence and blood, slavery and war, as our physical nature rejects tobacco and alcohol; and only after a long and fearful struggle against them, and a hardening and stupifying process, can the soul become reconciled to the presence of these deadly poisons and to being made their victim. The common view of the Bible reduces all to the necessity of justifying every outrage which man can inflict on man. For it is not pretended that certain deeds recorded as just, in the Bible, would not now be opposed to justice. If they are so now, they always were, unless the nature of justice is changed. I had rather believe that all the writers of the Bible were liable to err than to believe the Author of my being is unjust or changeable.

If the same deeds were recorded in the sacred volume of the Hindoos and attributed to Juggernaut, which are recorded in the Bible and attributed to the God of the Jews, wouldst thou hesitate to quote these very deeds as certain proof that Juggernaut was a monster of cruelty and blood, and not the true God? Yet it is admitted that the being who is loved and worshiped as God by Christendom may perpetrate the same deeds, which, when done by those whom others worship as gods, are violations of justice

and humanity, and are sure proofs of their idolatry. Point me to the heathen nation which attributes to what it calls God greater outrages upon humanity, than those which Christians father upon what they call God. It cannot be done.

Thou dost ask, "What is the use of the Bible?" As well ask what is the use of a book on electricity, light, air and water? They are of great use to one who wishes to study the laws which govern the operations of these elements. The book records the results of the experience and observations of some who have gone before us, and it greatly facilitates our progress. So the Bible is of great value in studying the science of man. In it are recorded the results of the observation and experience of those who were deeply read in man's social nature, relations and duties. The soul of man responds to the teachings of Jesus, when he says: "Love thy neighbor as thyself;" "do to others as ye would that others should do to you;" "love your enemies;" "bless those who curse you;" "do good to those who hate you;" "return to no man evil for evil;" "overcome evil with good." Such are the laws of social life taught by Jesus, and they are only developments of the laws of our social nature, written there by the Author of our being.

"But," thou wilt ask, "does not the Bible itself claim to be man's only infallible rule of faith and practice?" No; but, in the two fundamental principles of Christianity as taught by its Founder, it refers us to another and higher standard: "Love thy neighbor"—how? Not as the Bible tells thee, but "as thyself." Where art thou to go to learn how thou lovest thyself? To thyself, of course. "Do unto others"—how? Not as the Bible teaches, but "as ye would that they should do unto you." Where are we to go to learn how men feel and act toward us? To ourselves, of course. Thus, Jesus points us to a law within us—to our consciousness—to learn how to feel and act toward others.

How can we escape burning, drowning, freezing, starving? Wouldst thou send us to the Bible to learn? No. The slaveholder, warrior and drunkard, ask, "What shall we do to be saved from slave-holding, murder and drunkenness?" Wouldst thou point them to the Bible? No. What are falsehood, theft, robbery, murder and piracy? How can we be saved from these sins? Wouldst thou send men to the Bible for an answer? No. The question, as to what is right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, injurious or beneficial, between man and man, is, and must be, settled without reference to the Bible; and, as to how we are to be saved from slavery, war, drunkenness and other wrongs and dangers to body or soul, we know of ourselves what to do, without reference to the Bible or any other book. We know

that the only way to be saved from burning or drowning, is to keep out of the fire and water ; and, in the same way, by a law or guide within us, we know that the only way to be saved from sin, is to stop sinning. We need no Bible, no Revelation, to inform us that, if we stop sinning, we are saved from sin ; and, if we do not, we cannot be saved from it. Not one in a thousand of the acts of our lives is performed with reference to the Bible. Why, then, talk of it, as man's only infallible rule of faith and practice ?

It seems, to me, to be the climax of injustice, to cast me on the ocean of life, and then leave me to helpless dependence on a fellow being to pilot me through its storms and over its billows into a haven of rest. Must my destiny depend on my chance of getting a book and of learning to read it, or of getting another to read it to me ? A book, my only chart, compass, polar-star and pilot, as I go down into the eternal future ! My only hope ! And that book, the Bible ! Written thousands of years ago, in languages and by persons unknown to me, and which it is impossible for me to understand correctly ! It cannot be. Dost thou believe it ? The Bible itself repudiates the dogma, and points me to a light within me.

H. C. W.

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#### LETTER IV.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 17, 1850.

*Dear L.*—Thy request is, that I would specify some cases in which the Bible sanctions deeds that are violations of natural justice and equity. I will ; and while I do so, I ask thee to turn to the passages and read the accounts for thyself, and judge if I represent the facts correctly.

I have a brother living in Geneva, Ohio. Suppose he embraces the Hindoo religion, and seeks to persuade me that Sheva is the true God, and to convert me to his worship. I, aided by my neighbors, seize and hang him. Should thy brother's wife, daughter or son, adopt the opinion that Juggernaut is the true God, and seek to convert him to his worship ; and he, and the people of London, should seize that wife, son or daughter, and stone, hang or burn, her to death, couldst thou be made to believe that this is right ? No ; nothing could make thee believe it right to inflict death on men or women because they believe certain religious opinions and seek to propagate them. Man has a right to worship what he conceives to be God, according to the dictates of his own conscience. Freedom of thought and speech is a law of our being. Yet the Bible authorized men to kill their own wives, daughters, sons and

brothers, if they embraced the religion of idolaters and sought to propagate it. They were not to conceal them; nor pity, nor spare their own wives and children; but were to hurl the first stone at them. Some Brahmins come from Calcutta to New York, and try to convert the people there to the worship of Juggernaut. The New Yorkers go forth and burn the whole city of Calcutta, kill every man, woman and child in it, with the edge of the sword. Could that be just and right? The Bible expressly *commanded* these deeds (Deut. xiii, 6-18). Dost thou believe the Bible when it says such cruel and unnatural deeds were just? If so, why dost thou speak of freedom of thought and conscience, as a law of our nature? Why condemn the hanging and burning of heretics? Whosoever says it is wrong to kill men for their religion, denies the infallibility of the Bible.

Should London attack Dublin; kill all the men; and take the women and children as spoil, and distribute them among the conquerors for their use. Then should they attack Birmingham, killing every man, woman and child, and saying "nothing alive that breatheth." Could any kind or amount of evidence convince thee that such deeds ever were or ever can be just and right? Yet the Bible sanctions similar deeds, and says they were in perfect accordance with justice and humanity (Deut. xx, 10-18).

A Presbyterian priest of New York is traveling in Massachusetts with his wife. He puts up at the Tremont House, Boston. Some wicked men of the city seize his wife and murder her. The rulers of Massachusetts refuse to give up the murderers to the State of New York. New York wages war against Massachusetts and slaughters every man, woman and child, in the State, except six hundred men. Could any argument make thee believe it ever was, or can be, just? Yet exactly such a deed is sanctioned by the Bible (Judges xix and xx). Slaughter a whole State or nation, killing every woman and child, because the rulers refuse to give up some murderers! No power in heaven or earth could convince thee of its justice, till thy present nature is blotted out.

Victoria has six children. She dies; and Richard Cobden mounts the throne of England. To clear away every obstacle to the security and perpetuity of his reign, he beheads all the children of Victoria. Could any evidence convince thee that such a deed ever was, or can be, in accordance with natural justice and equity? Would it satisfy thee to be told that God had declared that her children should be destroyed, because their mother was an idolater, and was laboring to lead the people of England to worship idols? Richard Cobden says, "I was zealous for God, and I cut off the heads of the children because their mother worshiped idols, and enticed her people to do the same!" Would this convince thee that he did right? Thy nature cries out against it! Yet the Bible approved just such a deed, and says that the man was blessed who did it (2 Kings x)!

The people of China are full of zeal for their religion and their God, and seek to extirpate infidelity and atheism from the earth.

They regard the people of Pennsylvania as enemies of their God. So they come and attack Philadelphia, burn it to ashes, and slaughter, "with the edge of the sword, every thing that hath life in it, and leave not a soul that breatheth." Then they rush through the State and kill men, women and children, and take the land for a possession unto themselves. What wouldst thou say of such a deed? Would it satisfy thy reason and conscience, to be told that Pennsylvania had been promised, ages ago, to the Chinese, for a possession? That the Pennsylvanians, in the view of the Chinese and their God, were idolators, atheists, and had filled up the measure of their iniquity? They had never injured the Chinese, and scarcely knew of their existence till they came upon them. Can such a deed be reconciled to the laws of man's social nature, and to the nature of Him who is Justice and Love? Yet the Bible sanctions just such an aggressive, extirminating war, and almost universal Christendom profess to believe it. Dost thou? I do not; I cannot. The sun and the moon stopped in their orbits; the laws of the physical universe suspended, to enable one nation to extirminate other nations, slaughtering "men, women, children and sucklings, and leaving nothing that breatheth," to procure for themselves a habitation and a home! I know the Bible is mistaken when it says such a deed ever was or can be just and right.

Should God give to human beings a certain uniform physical organization, and then stamp them with reproach for having that nature, and command them to mutilate it, "as a token of a covenant between him and them," as an evidence of their faith in, and obedience to, him. Suppose God makes them with two ears and two eyes, and then requires them to cut off one ear and put out one eye, to test their love and obedience to him; he makes them with two hands, and commands them to cut off one, "as a covenant between him and them." Could any evidence make thee believe the author of our being ever did, or ever can, perpetrate such injustice and cruelty? Yet the Bible says God did thus require human beings to mutilate themselves, to test their love and obedience to him (Gen. xvii, 10-14).

A man in Connecticut picks up sticks on the Sabbath; he is stoned to death. Some poor friendless woman in Massachusetts is accused of witchcraft, and is hung. A child curses its father and mother, or becomes drunken and disobedient; he is hung or stoned to death. A beast dies of itself. The owner is forbidden to eat it himself, because he must keep himself pure and holy; but he may *give* it to the stranger, or *sell* it to the alien. Those who are born out of wedlock are excluded from the congregation (church) of God, to the tenth generation. A father drives from his house and home forever, one of his children, in order that another child may come into quiet possession of all his property.

Zachary Taylor commits fornication with the wife of John C. Calhoun; both are stoned to death; but he does the same deed to one of his female slaves, and the woman is scourged, and he is not punished at all, "*because she was not free!*" Zachary Taylor

kills Henry Clay, and he is hung; he kills one of his slaves and he is guiltless—because that slave was “his money!” Zachary Taylor takes the city of Monterey, kills all the men, male children and married women, and gives the unmarried women to his soldiers and his employers for their use. Could any thing in heaven or earth—any miracle, or any direct revelation from God—make thee feel and believe such deeds to be in accordance with the law of thy social nature—with justice, love and sympathy for thy kind? Yet the Bible approves such deeds.

William Lloyd Garrison is passing my house; I invite him in; and, on a solemn assurance of kindness and hospitality, he enters and goes to sleep, and I come softly to him and kill him. I go to Nicholas of Russia, under pretense of having a message to him from God; he rises to receive it; and, as I approach to deliver it, I stab him and he falls at my feet dead. Could any argument convince thee that justice ever approved such deeds? Yet the Bible assures us it did (Judges iii, 20-28; iv, 17-24).

The first lesson to be taught respecting the Bible, in the family, school, college and church, should be, that it is not infallible, and that the writers of it were liable to err, and did err. It is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible with justice and mercy. I wonder not that so many who are trained in childhood to receive it as a holy book, an infallible rule of life, are bewildered in their perceptions of truth and justice, and blunted and darkened in their moral nature. What they are taught to venerate as infallible truth and justice, is opposed to the facts and laws of their nature. Their humanity must necessarily be at war with what they are taught to consider as infallible truth.

According to the representation of universal Christendom, the writers of the Bible were mistaken in many things. As they represent the case, aggressive, exterminating wars, wrath, revenge, assassination, wholesale plunder, arson and murder, are in accordance with immutable justice and truth. The Old Testament, as a rule of life, in its penal code and wars, is *practically* rejected by churches of every name. What church would receive Abraham, Jacob, David or Solomon, to its bosom, if they were now living and should do as they once did? They would consign them to a felon's dungeon. What state or church would dare attempt to execute the penal code of the Jews, or wage war as they did? True, they all perpetrate deeds as unnatural, but not in the same way.

I would say, that, not only humanity, but also the spirit and precepts of Christianity, are essentially opposed to the wars and penalties which the Old Testament approved. The feelings and actions which Jesus taught men to cherish and perform toward their enemies, are so opposed to those which Moses taught, that one of them must have been mistaken. Who was? I believe the teachings of Moses as to the treatment of enemies, though he professed to have received them directly from his God, were opposed to the just, immutable laws and principles of man's social nature—

while the laws of love, forgiveness and self-sacrifice, as taught and explained by Jesus, are in perfect accordance with it.

The doctrine of the plenary inspiration, or infallibility of the Bible, as a rule of faith and practice, is a potent obstacle to human progress in justice, goodness and truth. Dost thou believe this doctrine? I ask thee, can it be right, to ask a man into thy house on thy assurance of kindness, and then stab him to death as he sleeps? To behead children because the father sinned? To approach a man under pretense of having a message from God to him, and then kill him as thou comest near him? To get women and children into thy hands as prisoners of war, and then deliberately slay them? Why dost thou hesitate to answer these as thy nature prompts? Because, if thou dost, thou must condemn what the Bible approves, and assert that its teachings are opposed to the essential laws and elements of thy social nature. There is not a crime in the catalogue of man's outrages upon man, which, if the Bible be infallibly true in its teachings, was not once in perfect accordance with truth, justice, love, and the purest sympathies of our nature; and those who embrace the dogma of the plenary inspiration of that book, cannot condemn any feeling or act as unnatural and unjust, without condemning the dearest and most cherished article of their religious faith. Their only infallible rule of faith and practice (the Bible) stands opposed, in many things, to the most undoubted and self-evident truths of their nature. But for this view of the Bible, it had been an easy task, comparatively, to convince men that slavery, war and death-penalty, are essentially and unchangeably wrong.

Every law of our nature is perfect, and, if unimpeded, would work out only purity, health and happiness, to body and soul. The sole and single object of all rightly-directed efforts for the good of man, is to bring each and every human being into perfect harmony with his own nature. So far as the Bible contributes to this end, it is right and useful—no further. The same may be said of all books. Just so far as the Bible, or any book, contains what is true, just and right, it is from God, and no further; for all truth, justice, goodness and love, are of God—no matter in what nor in whom they are found.

But, thou sayest, "The great object of the mission of Christ, and of every true and good man, is to reconcile man to the pure and good." True; but he who is reconciled to the laws of his nature, is reconciled to the just and true. To live in harmony with nature's law, is to live in harmony with truth. That is the most divine book which most perfectly delineates the nature, relations and duties, of man, and contains the most true, natural, and powerful motives to obedience to that nature, and to the relations and obligations that grow out of it. He that is at war with his own nature, is at war with all his fellow-beings. Every precept or example, whether recorded in the Bible or in any other book, which encourages anger, wrath, revenge, the lust of dominion or rule over man, the spirit of war or of slavery, or any outrage on the life and person of



man or woman, arrays man against himself and his fellow-beings. We are told that the Jews were required to cherish a feeling of deadly hatred and revenge toward the Amalekites and other nations, and that their eyes were not to pity, nor their hearts to show mercy, till they were utterly exterminated (Deut. vii, 1-3, 16; 1 Sam. xv, 3). Do such instructions tend to reconcile man to himself or to his fellow-men? It is madness—a libel on all that is just and true—to say such deeds ever were, or can be, right. As well say at once, that God requires us to cut our own throats, to blow out our own brains, and to violate all the physical and social laws under which he placed us, as to say that he ever ordered a man to inflict death on his brother.

When Moses and Joshua made war against the Canaanites, and ordered death to be inflicted for any cause, they waged war against nature and nature's God. If this be so, of course the God of nature never authorized those wars and penalties. To say that He did, is to say that He waged war against himself. Whoever wars against man, wars against God.

Dost thou say "God is all-wise, and his ways past finding out, and that man is ignorant, short-sighted, and unable to fathom the depths of his counsels? That it is presumption to sit in judgment on God?" Suppose a father in Ohio, who is an idolater and robber, dies. The Governor of the State seizes his children and beheads them, because of the sins of their father, and fastens the deed on God. I deny that such a deed is just. He says, "You are short-sighted, and unable to comprehend the counsels of God." What shall I say? If you have hardihood enough to charge such an unnatural and atrocious deed upon God, surely I ought not to be blamed when I attempt to vindicate him from so foul a charge. This nation fathers slavery upon God; and the whole world says he sanctions war and death-penalty: is it presumption in me to seek to vindicate him from such a charge? Whoever, of the past or present age, presumes to say that the God of nature ever commanded his children—human beings—to kill one another, I shall presume to tell them they are mistaken, simply because it would be a violation of the law of love, the fundamental law of our social existence and happiness—obedience to which, we are assured, comprehends our whole duty to man and to God.

Dost thou believe that love was designed to be the ruling element of our social being? The saving power, the divine principle, the manifestation of God in us, to lead us onward and upward forever? If so, it cannot be right for man to destroy the life of his brother, in the form of war, slavery, death-penalty, or in any other way; because to assume the right to do it, is to arouse, at once, all discordant elements in us. To assume or to exercise such power over person and life, is to excite coldness, suspicion, anger, wrath and revenge, and to array each and every man against each and every other in deadly hostility. It is utterly puerile to say that infinite Wisdom and Goodness places men under the law of love, and made their social existence and happiness depend on obedience to it,

and then commanded them to violate that law, and left them to suffer the consequences of such disobedience.

While God is love, and while love is the essential element of our social nature, and obedience to it our only condition of happiness in this and all other states of our being, it can never be right for man to violate the life of man. No matter who says it is right, I am authorized, by the facts of our nature and of history, to say he is mistaken. Humanity shrieks out against the deeds which the Jewish Scriptures father upon God, and pronounces their views of the Divine Being erroneous and unjust. Thou mayest as well deny that man is a social being, and bound to love his neighbors as himself, as to deny that the Old Testament writers were, in some things, mistaken.

H. C. W.

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## LETTER V.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 18, 1850.

*Dear L.*—I would call thy attention to another matter, in which the teachings of the Bible conflict with the teachings of Nature. I allude to *marriage* and the *position of woman*. Viewed as we view other books, the Bible would never have bewildered men on this subject; for then, wherein its teachings and examples were contrary to purity and justice, their minds would have rejected them as they would have done if the same had been found in Plato or Shakspeare. But this is not allowed, and we are taught from childhood to regard it as impiety, to suppose that the Bible ever sanctioned immorality and injustice. I ask thee to read the Bible as thou wouldst read the Koran, as to its teachings and examples respecting marriage and the position of woman, and tell why thou receivest the same things as pure and just, when they are found in the Bible, which are rejected, when contained in the Koran. The precept and the deed, in many respects, are precisely the same in both. Why are they regarded with loathing, when taught and practiced by Mohammed and his followers, and with respect, when taught and practiced by patriarchs, Moses and their followers?

MARRIAGE is a law of our social nature. Thy inquiry is, "What dost thou mean by marriage?" I mean, a mutual love between one man and one woman, which unites the soul of each to that of the other, leaving neither an independent existence in any of the interests of life: and fidelity to that love. This is marriage; and, as I view it, nothing else is. No man can be what he was designed to be, till, by marriage, the spirit of a woman has entered into him, to refine, beautify and strengthen his peculiar nature, and assimilate it to the divine. No woman can be what she was designed to be, till the spirit of a man has entered into her, to purify, elevate and adorn

her peculiar nature. Every man has a want in his *social* or *moral* nature, which nothing but the sympathy and affection of a woman, to whom he is married, can satisfy; so every woman has a want in her social or moral nature, which nothing but the love and sympathy of a man, to whom she is married, can satisfy. I believe it is the design of God, that each man should blend his existence with that of one woman, in marriage, *and only one*, and, in her, worship the pure, the just, the true, the beautiful and divine; and that each woman should, in marriage, blend her soul with that of one man, *and only one*, and, in him, worship the same.

Marriage, as thus defined, is one of the purest, noblest, most loving and divine, elements of our nature. No law was designed to work out more happy results. I might speak of the perpetuity of the race in the present state. Man should be the offspring of love, of marriage. As such, what had we been? How loving, how gentle, how generous, self-forgetting and noble! how divine! Love had been the vital breath of our social existence. What are we? Who of us are the offspring of marriage? How much of that pure, self-forgetting love, which blends the souls of one man and one woman into one, which makes each the dearest and most essential element of life to the other, and which alone constitutes marriage, enters into our social and spiritual life? One is almost tempted to believe that a mere animal existence, so far as our parents are concerned, is our only birth-right inheritance, so little do men and women comprehend the nature and design of this element of their nature.

Is it a wonder that human beings should prey on each other as they do? When we consider how few are the offspring of marriage; how little of all-hoping, all-confiding, all-enduring, self-forgetting love, enters into the elements of our social nature, as a birth-right legacy from our parents, and how much mere animal passion has to do in bringing men and women together in what is called marriage, and what jealousy, what bitterness, what hatred, what contentions, what absence of sympathy and kindly affection, what repugnance of natures, or what cold and heartless indifference between those from whom we receive whatever characteristics we possess by birth; can it be a matter of astonishment that they should convert this beautiful earth into a scene of oppression, carnage, tears and woe?

The law of marriage, if allowed to work out its designed results, would reconcile the now warring elements of society. Man could not make war upon his kind, if the soul of a pure-minded woman had entered into him. The spirit of love would cast out wrath, revenge, cruelty and violence, and fill him with gentleness and affection for all. He would dwell in love, and he could not outrage the person and rights of those who bare the image of that object whose existence is so identical with his, and in whom he feels that he lives, moves and has his being. His love and respect for her, would beget in him sympathy and respect for all human kind. Man, uninspired with the soul of a pure, gentle, self-forgetting woman, can

and does slaughter "men, women and infants," and desolate the earth with fire and sword. He seduces, betrays and abandons, confiding woman to the dark, unrevealed horrors of a crushed and broken heart. What a cry comes up from the depths of woman's all-trusting and loving nature, from the harem and the family circles of earth, against the wrongs done to her body and soul, by him who should be to her a loving friend and savior, as she would be to him! Could this be so if a womanly spirit had entered into him? if he were married? I think not. Read the Jewish Scriptures, in the light of the law of marriage as I have defined it. Do not the writers approve of deeds that are hostile to this law of our nature? Can polygamy be reconciled with it? A plurality of wives is an outrage on man's social nature, and never was, and never can be right. No power in the universe can make it just, while man retains his present nature. Yet the most distinguished saints and heroes of the Jewish nation, who are held up to us, from childhood, as models of piety and devotion, whom we are taught to regard as men "after God's own heart," and as wise, pure, and just, above all others, had many wives. Witness Jacob, Gideon, David and Solomon. And this practice is represented as consistent with social purity and justice! Dost thou believe it? I do not.

*Concubinage* is also represented as having been approved in the Bible, and special provisions are made in reference to it (Deut. xxi, 10-14). When the Jews went out to war, and the Lord (?) delivered a city into their hands, and a beautiful woman was found among the captives, whom any of the soldiers wished to have for a wife or concubine, he was to take her home and live with her, as with a wife. But, if after he had thus lived with her awhile, and finds that he has no more delight in her, and does not wish her for a wife any longer, he is to let her go—only he was not to sell her as merchandise, because "he had humbled her." This, we are told, is just and divine — that such treatment of women is according to nature! Women are found, who insist that the Author of their being, once commissioned man thus to treat them. Mark! not a word is said respecting the right of woman to put away the man, if she found he did not please her. He could cast her out when he pleased, but she had no power at all, over him!

Abraham (called the Father of the Faithful) had concubines. So did Jacob, so did David and Solomon, in multitudes. Is concubinage a violation of the law of marriage, as it is written on man's social nature? I cannot doubt it; canst thou?

If polygamy and concubinage are opposed to this law of nature *now*, they always were, and always must be. But we are told by writers of the Bible, and by almost universal Christendom, that these practices were once right. Wouldst thou have me believe it? I cannot. I had rather believe that these writers were mistaken, than that practices, so opposed to the social nature of man and women, and so utterly subversive of all social purity, peace and progress, were ever just.

When I read of the social position in which the Bible places woman, I marvel that a woman can be found, who, having any self-respect, any sense of justice and of moral purity, any right appreciation of marriage and the domestic relations and virtues, can believe that justice and moral purity ever sanctioned polygamy and concubinage, and the general treatment of woman by the Jews, as it is recorded and sanctioned in the Bible. Truth never inspired a man to justify practices so at variance with the law of marriage.

No wonder the Jews were a revengful, bloody-minded people. How could they be otherwise, with their views of marriage and their practices in reference to woman? Marriage, as a law of nature, making woman the equal and loved companion of man, in all the affairs of life, was unknown among them. Woman was a mere appendage to man, and entered not into his being as the life of his soul, the partner of his cares and labors, as an ever-present, ever-potent incentive to purity, justice, and all kind, gentle and noble deeds. She was regarded and treated as an object of mere sensual desire, made to serve the purpose of man's mere animal passions. In what was called marriage, she had no choice, but was bargained away by her father, to whom he thought fit. Her wishes, her affections, were never consulted. She could not make a vow or promise, without the consent of her father or husband. If she did, it was null and void. She might be divorced for most trivial causes, but had no such power over her husband. Love, companionship on her part, was never taken into the account, in what was called marriage. Indeed, according to the Bible, it is a misfortune and a disgrace to be a woman.

A people who could find a divine sanction for placing women in such a position, would easily find one for death-penalty, exterminating wars, and for any outrage upon their fellow-beings, which lust, avarice, hatred or revenge, might dictate.

What shall I say of slaveholders? They practice concubinage under the same sanctions under which Jacob and David did, and Mohammedans do. They say their only infallible rule of faith and practice authorizes it. The church and clergy of this land, generally, sanction and perpetuate this concubinage—these harems of slaveholders. I ask thee to consider what influence the Bible, as it is now regarded, has had on the law of marriage—how much of the horrible pollutions, oppressions, violence and slaughter, resulting from its violations, may be traced to the views of woman and her social position, as approvingly recorded in that book, and said to have been sanctioned by purity and truth.

Woman, throughout Christendom, as well as Heathendom, solely because she is a woman and not a man, is denied all voice in making the laws of society, while she is held amenable to their penalties; her *person*, after what is called marriage, passes from her control, under that of her husband, while she, alone, must suffer the horrible consequences of the abuses practiced upon her: she is held to be bound by a different and higher standard of character than that by which man is bound; she must crucify the holiest law of

her nature — marriage — or accept whatever happens to offer in that relation; she is subjected to brutal scorn and ribaldry, if she, in obedience to duty, goes forth on her mission of love, in Church or State, to mitigate and abolish the sorrows and evils of war, slavery, and other social wrongs. All the social, religious and political customs and institutions of the world, being created and sustained by men, are so managed as to crush her, and to prevent her from assuming a position of personal independence, and to train her into helpless dependance on man, and make her an easy and willing prey to his passions — and all this under the sanction of the Bible.

And there are women who quote the Bible to justify their own prostitution; especially when it is effected deliberately, legally, and under an outward form called marriage! They say — “wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, in all things!”

Rise, woman, if thou hast any respect for thyself, or any true affection for man, the companion of thy eternal existence, and who must sink with thee to hell, or rise with thee to heaven, and, Bible or no Bible, save thyself, thy body and soul, from the pollutions to which thou art subjected. Into whatever depths of pollution thou art cast — whether with law and Bible, or without them — the human race must go with thee. Man cannot rise whilst thou art sinking — he cannot sink whilst thou art rising. Come forth, then, from the harem, and every nameless place of prostitution, whether thou art cast into them with or without the form of marriage; enter into man and inspire him with all thy feminine nature, and thus accomplish thy holy mission on earth, by redeeming man from violence and blood.

But who shall redeem thee, thou confiding, betrayed victim of an animalized man? He who was designed to be thy lover, thy husband, thy sustaining friend, the sharer of all thy burdens, thy redeemer, the light and life of thy soul, hath plunged thee into darkness, and overwhelmed thee in a sea of pollution and moral death. And for this he pleads the sanction of the Bible!

One of the worst results of the common view of the infallibility of the Bible, is, that those who are trained to it are obliged to exercise their ingenuity, constantly, to reconcile the most revolting acts of revenge and pollution, with justice and purity. Had they seen these deeds recorded in any other book, they would have pronounced them wicked in the highest degree; but, finding them in the Bible, which they are taught to regard as the infallible word of God, they are driven to the necessity of trying to reconcile, with truth, justice, love, forgiveness, honesty, and all that is right and good, what they themselves would declare to be falsehood, injustice, wrath, revenge, plunder, prostitution, robbery, murder and assassination, had they been recorded any where else. Such is the position of every man's mind, who believes in the infallibility of the Bible. Its effects are seen in the reasonings of such, on war, slavery and marriage. They are ever at work to reconcile war with peace, slavery with liberty, hatred with love, prostitution with purity, robbery with rectitude, piracy with piety, and all the most

revolting crimes, with the most exalted virtues. Their souls are lost in chaos.

For myself, I have no hope that society will be redeemed from the corruptions, oppressions and murders, resulting from violations of marriage—that law of our social nature which was designed to refine, elevate and bless, mankind—so long as it is believed that the writers of the Bible were infallible, and that God approved or commanded all which they say he did.

I have remarked that man should be the offspring of marriage, and not of prostitution; of love, and not of hatred; of peace, and not of war. God is love, and it was his design that man should be love; that this should be the life-principle of his social nature. This is the natural aliment, the vital breath, of the soul, and as essential to its health and growth, as air is to the body. Love is always pleasant to the soul, because its nature is to love—*man is love!* This will ultimately be as true as the assertion that “God is love;” and to dwell in love will be to dwell in man as well as in God.

But thy inquiry is, “How is man to obtain this love nature?” How, indeed! The question may well be asked, by every philanthropist and every Christian, with deep solicitude! Those who believe that God works out his purposes by arbitrary revelation and miraculous interposition, will say, “Man has entirely lost this divine nature, and can obtain it only by a direct interposition of God.” I do not believe this love element of man’s social nature is lost. It exists, and will exist, despite all efforts of men to crush it. It will live while the soul lives. How is it to be nurtured and strengthened, till it expels all the jarring elements of anger, hatred, revenge, unkindness, cruelty, and violence out of us, and thus works out for us its designed results? Only by obedience to marriage, that great law of our nature which leads man and woman to unite their souls, each in that of the other, in pure love. Their souls are one; no jarring element ever can enter the soul of that man and woman who are properly married. Each dwells in the other; the soul of each exhausts its energies in love and devotion to the other; each worships the pure, true and divine, in the other; each recognizes the presence and glory of God in the other; each lives in perfect harmony with the other and with God. The offspring of such a union would be born of love, of harmony. Then let the children of such parents be nurtured in the love that gave them birth, and the elements of wrath and revenge, that have filled this earth with tears and groans, could find no place in that nature. Is not this the only process by which the element of hate can be expelled from human society, and the element of love substituted? I believe it is.

Hatred is the element of discord, which man has introduced into his social nature; love is the element of harmony, which man must introduce to expel hatred and restore peace and concord in us. This can never be done while wrath, revenge, avarice, suspicion, envy, and every discordant element, rage in and govern the souls

of those to whose agency we owe our existence, and from whom we receive the elements of our social being. If pure, self-forgetting love be the controlling element of their social nature—a love that blends the soul of each with that of the other in sweet harmony—this will be the vital principle, the life-breath of our social existence. But if anger, jealousy or revenge, be their governing principle, and there be no affinity between them but coldness, indifference, unkindness or hatred, these must be the ruling elements of social life in their children. Then their course may be traced in blood.

This subject must and will be discussed. No man who seeks to drive wrath and revenge from the human soul, and to abolish slavery, war, and evil in its infinitely diversified forms, from the earth, and bring the race together in love and fraternity, can overlook this matter. Who infuses into man's social nature those discordant elements that fill the earth with groans and tears? The God who is love never did. He put us under the law of love, and interwove it into our social nature as its vital, saving principle. Who, then, has done this wrong to us? Man, and man alone. I see no other agency in it. What a fearful position is that of a father and mother! Who infused into the social nature of that child those elements of hatred and revenge that make its existence on earth a living death! One continued succession of furious, angry, revengeful excitement, and mortifying, humiliating repentance? *Parents* have imparted to us the wrath nature: to them must we look to restore to the race the love nature.

As to the social forms of recognizing the existence of marriage, that which is adopted by the Friends seems to me most natural, *i. e.*, that the parties themselves perform all the ceremony that is needed. Priests and magistrates should not meddle with it. A written document, signed by the parties and their friends, and placed on public record, seems the natural mode.

As to appealing to the Bible to prove or disprove any question of right or wrong, I have ceased to do it. A text is no proof whether polygamy or concubinage, slavery or war, be right or wrong. Though every text in the Bible sanctioned polygamy, slavery, war, death-penalty, or the dominion of man over man or woman, and the existence of governments of violence and blood, I should not believe them to be right, simply because these deeds are opposed to the fixed laws of our social nature. No miracle, no direct revelation, no arbitrary command, no conceivable argument adduced to prove that man may rightfully perpetrate them, can prevail against the self-evident truths and fixed laws of nature; the omnipresent, irresistible witness of my own soul against them.

The question is decided, in my mind, that man cannot rightfully inflict death on himself or on a fellow-being; that slavery is wrong; that woman has a right to speak and act in the family, school, social circle, in church and state—wherever and on whatever subject man has; that no man, nor set of men, ever did or can, have the right to dictate law to man or woman, and punish them if they disobey. If the witness of the Bible in favor of these outrages is



opposed to the witness of my soul against them, I shall reject the testimony of the book.<sup>1</sup>

Dost thou say the Bible sanctions no violations of natural law? Then are polygamy, concubinage, and legalized, systematic prostitution, in accordance with nature; for the Bible does sanction these. Then, also, are aggressive, exterminating wars, with all their wholesale robbery, arson and murder; then are death-penalty, assassination and tyranny, perfectly natural, and, of course, just and right. Indeed, if every thing sanctioned in the Bible be in accordance with nature, and, of course, with justice, it would be difficult to name any outrage on man or woman which is not perfectly natural and divine; for there is no conceivable deed of violence, to person or property, which is not approvingly recorded in that book. True, they were generally done under the then existing forms of law and government—and under pretense of defense, punishment of crime, and justice, and a zeal for their religion and their God, and of a desire to extirminate idolatry; but the deeds were done, deeds which thou, and all, would justly regard, if done now, as outrages on nature, no matter under what forms, nor from what motives, nor by whom they were perpetrated. Man's social nature, and the relations that grow out of it, never change; and what is opposed to them *now*, always was, and always must be. How, then, canst thou, or any man who believes that the Bible sanctions no violations of natural law and justice, speak of any crime as unjust and wicked? Those who now condemn polygamy, concubinage, prostitution, aggressive, exterminating wars, death-penalty, murder and assassination, as unnatural and inhuman, deny the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, and virtually say the writers of that book were liable to err, and did err, like the writers of other books.

But thou wilt say, "The above named wrongs are condemned in the Bible." They are; and that, too, in the strongest terms. The teachings of Christ and the apostles are as emphatically opposed to the deeds I have named, and to all war and death-penalty, as light is to darkness. The uniform spirit of Christianity is against them. But this only proves that the Bible, as a whole, is at variance with itself, and, of course, not infallible; and, as a book, no more to be taken as a rule of faith and practice, than any other book containing an equal amount of truth and error, of good and evil.

To conclude my remarks on the Bible, as a distinct topic, I ask thee, Dost thou believe the Bible to be infallible? If so, is that right *now* which it says was right then? If not, how canst thou think justice and truth unchangeable? If the writers of the Bible were infallible when they say the deeds to which I have alluded were once just, where is thy standard of truth, justice and equity? Where is thy hope? What is thy God?

But the Bible is nothing, in itself. The Power behind it, from which it is said to emanate, gives to it its only value, in the estimation of those who regard it as an infallible rule of faith and practice. When they say the Bible sanctions war, slavery, death-pen-

alty, polygamy and concubinage, they mean that God sanctions them. Whatever the Bible commands, they say, God commands; what it forbids, God forbids. In my next, therefore, I will consider the popular notions of God, as they bear on war and slavery, the sacredness of life and liberty, and on marriage. H. C. W.

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## LETTER VI.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, *January 19*, 1850.

*Dear L.*—As we have mingled our spirits in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, York Minster, and the consecrated temples of Strasburgh, Berlin, Vienna, Inspruck, and other cities of Europe, how often have we asked, What sentiment reared and consecrated these edifices? And the answer has been: "WORSHIP—reverence for God." Worship of God! What possible connection can these piles of brick, stone and mortar, have with the worship of God?

What is God? Where is he? How can we know him? What relations do we hold to him? How does he manifest himself to us? These questions naturally suggest themselves to every human being. Who can answer them to his own satisfaction? But thou sayest, "Tell me all about thyself." I will, as to my views and feelings respecting God, so far as my limits will admit; premising, however, that I shall consider him solely in reference to man's relations and obligations to man.

"Dost thou believe in the existence of God?" is thy first inquiry. I do; not because of any argument drawn from the Bible, or from the external world—for all arguments from these sources take for granted the thing to be proved—but simply because I cannot help it. God is an element of my social nature, as really as love is; and I can no more reject his existence than my own. So far as we are the offspring of marriage, of a perfect harmony of soul between those who are our parents, love is the highest and noblest element of our social and spiritual being; the life of our souls; the power that was designed to guard our spirits from harm and heal the wounds which sin may inflict upon them. I see not how any being, that feels a conscious sense of justice, love and sympathy for his kind, can deny the fact of a God. I do not believe there ever was, or ever can be, an atheist. I believe, too, that God has a being distinct from man's; that he is the intelligent, wise and benevolent Author of our existence, and of the universe of mind and matter with which we are connected.

As to the title, God, I have no respect for it; my thoughts and affections go to that for which the word stands. Any other name, or title, which represents to me the same Agent or Being, would

be entitled to as much respect. The word God, in the mouths of those who believe that war, slavery, death-penalty, or governments of violence ever did, or ever can, have a rightful existence, can awaken only emotions of disgust in the bosom of those who love justice and goodness, and who seek the kingdom of God. Associate the word God with any evil, and it stands for the evil with which it is connected. The meaning of the title may change, according to the nature of that to which it is applied; but the nature of the spirit, principle or deed, remains the same, no matter whether it be designated by this word, or by any other. Call a rose what thou wilt, it is still a rose. Call a thorn by any other name, and it is still a thorn. Call a slaveholder a friend of liberty, or an honest man; he is still a tyrant, and the incarnation of meanness, selfishness and dishonesty. Call a warrior a hero, a brave and gallant man; he is still a murderer — a compound of wrath, revenge and cruelty. Persons or things derive not their nature from names or titles; but titles derive their significancy from the nature of the persons or things for which they stand. When the word God stands for love, it awakens veneration and worship; but when it stands for wrath, revenge and murder, as it does in the mouth of a slaveholder, warrior, or their apologists, and of those who oppress and prostitute the bodies and souls of men or women, it excites only disgust and contempt. It is a mere *cant word*, and means nothing, or it stands for that which a sincere and true heart must abhor.

God (I speak of the Author of our being) is man's law of life; and has made himself known as such to him. Where? How? This is the question. Where shall we go to learn how he would have us treat our physical and social nature; how to feel and act toward ourselves and our fellow beings? There are two ways in which it is supposed he makes himself known to men: (1) through the organic or constitutional laws under which he has placed us; and (2) through arbitrary commands or revelations, given in dreams, visions, or some direct communication; or, in other words, through NATURE—or, through what is generally called REVELATION. The generally received opinion of Christendom and Heathendom is, that he makes known his will to man, as to his social relations and duties, by direct interposition, or arbitrary commands. The religious rites and institutions of Christians and Heathens, rest on the same foundation; *i. e.*, immediate inspiration or revelation. The sacred books of Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Hindoos, and of all nations, base their claims to implicit faith and respect, solely on the assumption that they came from God to man through direct revelation, and without reference to the fixed laws and elements of his physical and social nature. Christians observe water baptism, communion by eating bread and drinking wine, stated oral prayer, a sabbath, solemn assemblies and mass; they organize into churches, maintain a priesthood, on the authority of a supposed, arbitrary divine command: Mohammedans and heathens base their priesthood, holy days, sacrifices, and all their religious rites, decent or indecent, bloody or otherwise, on exactly the same foundation.

Christians establish and execute governments of violence and blood; hold slaves; prostitute women; make war; hang, behead or burn offenders against the State or Church; besiege, bombard and burn cities and towns; slaughter innocent men, women and children, and desolate the earth; they commit robbery, rapine, murder and piracy; they feed and clothe themselves by stripping others of food and raiment; they grow rich by impoverishing others; they educate themselves by keeping others in ignorance; they add house to house, and farm to farm, by depriving others of house and home, and hunting them from the face of the earth; they crush woman, shut her out from profitable industry, and close against her all avenues to wealth and personal independence, to make her the easy and willing victim of their sensual gratification. All these things they do, under the sanctions of an arbitrary, immediate revelation from God. Jews, Mohammedans, Heathens and Savages, do the same deeds, under sanction of the same authority. Christians founded the Inquisition, burnt and hung Quakers, witches and heretics, under the authority of arbitrary law, supposed to have been given by God, through prophets, apostles or priests. The Hindoos swing on hooks, cast themselves under the wheels of the car of their god, immolate widows on the funeral piles of their husbands, and cast their children into the Ganges; Mohammedans keep harems, and spread fire and sword through kingdoms, by the same authority.

Thus God is supposed to rule men, as to their social nature and relations, by arbitrary laws and penalties, made known to them in divers times and places, and through prophets, apostles, priests, or other chosen agents.

Thy inquiry is, "How dost thou think God makes himself known to man?" I answer, *solely through his works of nature* — more especially, through our own nature, by a standing, birthright revelation, interwoven into the elements of our physical, intellectual, social and spiritual being. He works out *all* his purposes touching each individual, and touching the whole race, in reference both to body and soul, by the agency of constitutional and unchangeable laws, and never by miracles or direct interposition. Since the first man and woman, there never was a human being brought into existence, except by one and the same law: all are developed and sustained, and will be carried on through this state into another, and through all the changes through which they will pass, in their unending progression, by the agency of those laws which the Creator has incorporated into our nature.

This is admitted, so far as our *bodies* are concerned. All the functions and operations of these, are allowed to be carried on solely by an ever-present, ever-active agent or power within us. The lungs play, the heart beats, the blood flows, secretions are made of whatever is necessary to form and keep in healthy action every organ; and every part of the human body is kept in constant activity, to work out physical life and health, by a vital principle or power within, which is ever-watchful to guard the system against the approach of danger, and to expel the enemy, when he has, by

human ignorance or design, found a lodgment in it. What, when, and how much, shall we eat and drink? When and how long shall we sleep? What odors, sounds and sights, are pleasant and healthful? How much and what kind of clothing shall we wear? What air is healthy, and what deadly? We never expect an arbitrary revelation to enable us to solve these questions. We go to our bodies, and are satisfied with the permanent revelation which is written there.

Why should we look for any other to guide us in our social relations and duties? There is no reason why we should, and every reason why we should not. Analogy would teach us to expect that God would make known his will to us, respecting our entire nature, in the same way. *Facts* show that God does work out his designs touching our souls, as he does touching our bodies, by a power that is ever on the watch, to guard them from harm; to heal the wounds inflicted on them by our ignorance or wickedness; to keep out all enemies to our social nature and happiness, and to expel them if they have gained entrance.

This power, or principle, of social life is ever prompting us to feelings and actions toward others, which administer to the healthy growth and happy development of our social nature; and warning us against those which have a contrary tendency. It leads us to select appropriate food for the soul, as the vital principle of the body guides us to select proper food for that. It demonstrates to us that love, benevolence, forgiveness, kindness, justice, mercy, truth, self-sacrifice, non-resistance, are to the soul what wholesome food is to the body. We know these are the natural aliment of our social nature, by the same process by which we learn that bread is a natural aliment of the body; *i. e.*, they healthfully and happily promote the growth and strength of that portion of our being. In the exercise of such feelings, and the performance of such deeds, we are conscious of a vigorous and joyous activity, elevation and happiness, of *life*, in our social nature. From the same divine Teacher we learn, that anger, revenge, wrath, unkindness, selfishness, war, oppression, injustice, and all wrong-doing to others, are as certain poisons to our social, as are alcohol, tobacco and arsenic, to our physical, nature. We are conscious that enemies are in our souls when these are there. We are restless, wretched; and the expression of the eye and the countenance, and the tones of the voice, and the stiffened muscles, give outward proof that a deadly foe is in us, when anger or revenge is there. It is a fact no less certain and tangible, that God has placed in man's social nature, a power, to act as a sentinel to guard it against danger, or as a redeemer, to heal its wounds, and to expel enemies after they have entered the citadel of social life, than it is that he has thus provided for the welfare of our physical nature.

Dost thou ask, "Where shall man go to find his God?" The popular religion says, to the Bible, to a church organization, to a priesthood, to human governments, to ordinances, and to direct, arbitrary revelations, given in various ways, at different times, and

to divers persons. They teach us to associate the Deity with a book, a sabbath, a meeting house; an oral prayer; with war, slavery and death; the sword and gallows; with a title, and various external rites and institutions: but I go to none of these to find him. I can find man in all these; and *only* man, as a traitor to his fellow beings and his God, in the sword, the gallows and slave-auction. There is much of truth in the Bible, and much of error; but man put them both there. But to find God, I go to man, as he comes, pure and perfect, from the hand of his Creator; not as he comes, deformed and mutilated in body and soul, from the hand of men, in the Church or State. I find God in the laws and operations of man's body and soul. He is within each and every human being, arranging and controlling the empire of his physical and social nature. To my body I go to learn the will of God touching that; to my soul, to find it respecting that. Where dost thou go to find it? We shall never, in this, nor in any other state, see, know or find, the Author of our being, except through the nature he has given us, and to the universe with which we are, and ever shall be, connected.

But thy reply is, "Admitting that this standing revelation is all-sufficient to guide us in learning and performing our duties to our fellow beings, is it sufficient to teach us our duties to God?" Thy inquiry assumes that man owes duties to God, distinct and separate from those which he owes to his fellow men. I believe it is a false and pernicious assumption. We owe no duties to God apart from those which we owe to man; and when we have done all our duties to the latter, we have discharged all our duties to the former. Are we bound to love God with all our soul, mind and strength? We are. How can this be done? On what is our affection to be fixed? into what are our souls to be absorbed, when they dwell in love to God? The heart must twine around something when it loves; something that will feed and impart life to our love, by returning it. We cannot love an abstraction, a nonentity; because it cannot return our affection, nor be pleased nor profited by it. Love, that seeketh not her own, but another's good, gives to its object form, life, beauty, and all loveable qualities. It imparts itself to those around whom it twines, and exhausts its energies and its adoration upon them, to adorn and elevate them. Love is the only aliment of love; it feeds on itself: without this, it starves, droops and dies. God, to be loved with all our souls, must be manifested in, or associated with, something; and in all ages and nations, men have thus embodied him in the various objects of their worship. Heathens embody their God in hideous images, made of wood or stone—or in some object of physical or animated nature: Jews embody theirs in their temple and their observances. The Christian, imitating the Jew, embodies the object of his worship in a temple, a sabbath, a church, a priesthood, an observance, and a holy book, and pours out his deepest, holiest love and veneration upon these; and the worship of the Christian and the Heathen are alike useless, and foreign to that which is required by nature and sanctioned by the

teachings of Jesus. This points to man, as the manifestation of the true and living God ; and teaches us that in loving him we are to love our Creator ; and that we can dwell in God only by dwelling in love to man.

Dost thou ask, "Is not *veneration* a part of our nature?" I believe it is. We must reverence and adore something ; and God will be the object of our highest adoration. But how can we adore him? Veneration, like love, gives form to its object. We cannot venerate an intangible abstraction. Religionists are apt to exhaust their veneration on that which cannot be benefited by it—on God, as he is embodied in governments of violence, in temples, holy days and observances. I would have this veneration expend itself on God, in man. Those who feel the most sacred respect and reverence for man, most truly and *profitably* venerate God. Contempt for man is contempt for God.

Dost thou ask, "Are we not to worship God?" Yes. How? In the exercise of all good feelings, and the performance of all good deeds, and in using means to learn and to perform, all our duties toward our fellow beings. In this, and in no other way, can we render acceptable worship to God. This seems to me to be the true idea of divine worship. The natural and true definition of marriage is, that each man should love God supremely, by loving one woman with all his soul ; dwell in God by dwelling in love to her, and worship God in an entire consecration of soul to adoration of the true, the just, the pure, beautiful and divine, in her ; and each woman love and worship the same in some one man. But where can this be found in man or woman? If it cannot, it ought to be, and will be. The only true idea of philanthropy is, a practical worship of the Divine in the human, accompanied with efforts to make every human being a true and living incarnation of the Divinity.

What has been the result of this separating the Divine from the human — God from man — in our love and worship, and in defining our duties? Evil, and only evil. Man has exhausted all the energies of his soul upon an abstraction — a mere sentimental divinity, rather than upon his fellow beings around him. His holiest love — his most intense devotion — have been expended upon that which never returned his affection, which could not be benefited by it, and which gave no tokens that it was pleasing and acceptable to him, instead of exhausting them upon the living, needy beings about him, who longed for such love and devotion, who would have reciprocated them, and whose lives would have been made bright and beautiful by their sustaining and elevating power. Man has wasted the purest and most divine portion of his nature upon a fiction, rather than a fact ; upon the shadow, to the utter neglect of the substance: for, when men attempt to grasp, love and worship God, *aside from man*, they clasp a shadow, and expend their love and devotion upon a nonentity, simply because men can know nothing of God aside from man.

Is this no loss? — no evil? — no infatuation? To exhaust our energies upon a phantom, when so many living, suffering human

beings, are by our side, pleading, with crushed hearts and tearful eyes, for our love and sympathy, to feed their starving souls and bodies? Is this no wrong to man? no insult to the God, whose child and representative he is? What mean those stupendous temples built for God, and consecrated to him, over all the earth, shooting their proud domes and turrets to heaven, while his "little ones" are gathered around them, houseless and homeless, not having where to lay their heads? What mean that gorgeous apparel — those costly robes of silk and fine linen — those decorations and gaudy shows, that make up the worship of that abstract divinity, while earth's toiling millions, to whose industry this world owes all its necessaries and its comforts, are naked, starving, and uncared for? It means that man is so absorbed in his love and devotion to his abstract deity, that he has no affection to bestow on his fellow beings; that his ideal object of worship swallows up his love and reverence, leaving nothing but coldness or contempt for man; that duty to that absent divinity, has swallowed up his sense of duty to living, present man.

Besides, see the withering influence of this attempt to love and worship God, aside from man, on those who do it. We twine our souls around an *abstraction*: we seek a home in the bosom of a cold, stern, soulless phantom. What is the result? The soul, meeting no responsive touch, word, look or smile, recoils upon itself, and dies. We can awaken no corresponding emotion in the object of our worship. Our souls agonize to get an answering smile of love, to illuminate the night in which we grope, feeling after God; but it is like seeking a warm, loving home, in the heart of an iceberg. However entire and devoted our love and worship, we cannot impart one particle of heat to that infinite *coldness*, nor kindle one ray of light in that eternal *night*, which we so fondly love and worship. Oh! it is fatal to the life of our souls, to attempt to make for them a loving home, in the cold, dark bosom of such a phantom. Why do we not concentrate and exhaust our energies in love and devotion to man, who is "God manifest in the flesh?" Then would our love for God be practically purifying, elevating and beneficial, to his poor, perishing and longing children on earth. Let us make duty to God and duty to man identical, in all the relations and practical purposes of life, and then would love work out for man its designed result — ETERNAL LIFE. H. C. W.



## LETTER VII.

PENMAEN, *Ohio, January, 20, 1850.*

*Dear L.*—I wish to be understood in my views of God and the manner in which we are to love and worship him, and hold communion with him. I shall, therefore, reiterate, in this letter, in other words, many of the ideas contained in my last.

One of thy inquiries relates to *communion* with God. What is meant by this? My life has been spent in trying to maintain an intimacy with the Eternal. This is, and ever has been to me, the one great and glorious idea. But, how fatally was I deluded as to the manner of attaining it! Yet I did as the great portion of Christendom and Heathendom does. I shut my eyes and my heart upon this world and all its objects of affection and interest and struck out, in spirit, into the dark, fathomless, shoreless abyss, and there sought to find something around which the deep concentrated affections and sympathies of my soul might twine, and which I might love and worship as God. I found something; to which my thoughts, always, and of necessity, gave form and locality. The form was that of a man; the locality, that of a *throne* on which he sat as a sovereign. To this being I sang and called it praise; to him I bowed, and spake in terms of eulogy of him and of condemnation of myself, and called it prayer and worship: I came close to him, I tried to get into his bosom, and to pour into it all the out-gushing affections of my longing spirit. But no answering word, look or smile, of sympathy ever came back to me. I repeat it; my heart reposed in his stern, cold, unsympathizing nature, as in the bosom of an iceburg. By night and by day, did I, for years, turn my back upon humanity and look away from earth, and pour out all my soul into that dark concave, above and around me; but no sweet, sustaining word of love and sympathy was ever returned; my voice and my affection went off into the deep void, and were lost to me. But where was that something that I thus adored as God? Where, indeed, but in my own imagination! He was a phantom—a mere abstraction. I was simply and fatally mistaken in my conceptions of my Creator and the way to commune with him. I did suppose, that in order to do this, I must withdraw my thoughts and feelings from my fellow beings and all earthly concerns; that in proportion as I turned man out of my heart, God would come in. Hast thou not had this experience? Has not every one who has been trained to the popular notions of the Deity?

Still God is a want of my nature. I must love and worship something as God, or, socially, endure a living death. I have ceased to go off yonder to find that something; I take no more worshiping expeditions into that dark unknown; but, while I have not a doubt that there is a Power, an Agent, a living, intelligent Cause, who formed this universe, I shall no more go out of this world after him, while I live in it—but shall commune with him by communing with what I find here. When I go into another

state, as I doubt not I shall, then I will commune with him through what I find there.

What a resplendent mirror is this world in which to behold the face of God! How distinctly, how beautifully, how boldly, is he daguerreotyped in my own heart! "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Wouldst thou see God? Look into thine own heart, and in proportion to its purity and polish, will the vision be clear and glorious. When thy heart is full of love and good-will to thy fellow beings; when thou art engaged among the poor and outcast, to heal the wounds that poverty and vice have made in their spirits, and thy thoughts are on kindly deeds intent; then thou wilt find the divine impression on thy heart, distinct and beautiful. Then it is that thou mayst see thy God, as it were, face to face. But let the brightness and beauty of thy soul be obscured and deformed by anger, revenge, unkindness, or any feeling of ill-will toward thy fellow men—then will this vision of God be dim. Then to look at God in thy heart, will be like looking at the sun through a glass obscured by smoke.

Man is my fellow being—and the highest manifestation of the divinity with which I am acquainted. I will worship him as he is embodied in human form. When I dwell in love to man, I dwell in God, and God dwells in me. Those hearts that are full of forgiveness, pity, kindness, and good-will to men, are full of God. On the other hand; those who hate man hate God. Whatever outrage man would do to man, he would do to God.

They do wage war upon God, who wage war upon man; they do lie to God who lie to man. Those who would dictate law to man, would do the same to God. Thus, while in this state, my communion with human beings is the highest and holiest intercourse I can hold with my Creator. I associate the divine with the human. I see and hear God in man, and when he is loved and worshiped in man, he returns our love and sympathy, through the love and sympathy which answer to ours from the eye, the voice, the countenance, and hearts of our fellow beings. In this way, God is made to us, a *living* fact, a practical reality; and his worship is no longer a round of observances, that are useless to man, and of course, of no account with God; but it becomes a substantial good to mankind. Instead of building and consecrating costly temples to God, it would build houses and create comfortable homes for the destitute and despairing; instead of consecrating times, places and ordinances, it would beautify and consecrate man in our deepest and holiest sympathies. When my spirit rests in the bosom of humanity, it rests in the bosom of God.

That religion which sees God in sabbaths, ordinances, meeting-houses, churches, governments, titles, stations, constitutions and bibles, rather than in man, can readily enslave and kill men to maintain these rites and institutions. It counts every thing sacred

but man; it assumes that he is totally depraved, and it does what it can to make and keep him so. There is no outrage upon man or woman for which it cannot find a divine sanction. It moves heaven and earth to rescue a sabbath from desecration, while it enslaves, shoots and hangs men. Such is the religion of what is called Christendom. Its priests and churches exalt God in heaven, and crush man on earth; they bless and adore God in heaven, while they curse and pour contempt upon man on earth. Open thine eyes, look around thee, and the fact will be but too obvious. God is unchangeable; man is changeable, progressive; and in nothing more so than in his conceptions of the Divine. The views of God that are held sacred in one age, may be, and are, repudiated in the next. Just so long as men look to some direct revelation to learn the character of God and their relations to him, they will be subjected to impositions, and liable to be incited to perpetrate outrages upon humanity, under the authority of some supposed arbitrary revelation. In proportion as they look to the works of his hands, especially to the witness for God in their own souls, to learn his character and government, will they progress in the knowledge of man, and, of course, of the true God.

We must go from the visible to the invisible, from the tangible to the intangible; we must know ourselves before we can know God; we must love man before we can love God; or, rather, we must know and love them both together—as one. If we say we love God before we love our brethren, we are deceived; for if we love not the seen, how can we love the unseen? If we love not man, how can we love God? We cannot; and our estimate of God will ever be as is our estimate of man. A despiser of man cannot be a worshiper of God. The slaveholder, the warrior and the rum-seller, cannot worship the pure, true and divine, while they enslave, slaughter and imbrute their fellow-men, in whom these should be embodied; they cannot honor God in heaven while they hang and enslave him, in man, on earth. In proportion as men progress in their views of man, will their views of Deity become elevated; and the only way to inspire them with just and true conceptions of the latter, is to improve their conceptions of the former. How preposterous, then, how worthless that religion, that church or priesthood, which talks about honoring God, while it justifies slavery—which prays and preaches about the holiness and glory of God, while it hangs and shoots men—which builds temples, makes prayers, offers sacrifices, consecrates sabbaths, ceremonies and books to their God in heaven, while they cast out, curse, scourge, enslave, hunt with dogs, shoot and hang the Divinity that is embodied on earth in their fellow-beings. Such a religion can do nothing for us, except to deceive and ruin us. Only a religion which embodies God in man, and teaches us to find him in the nature and relations of man to man, and to worship him in loving and doing good to man, can ever purify and save us.

WORSHIP GOD! Yes, in all ages and nations, men have worshiped what they have called God. Go to New York, London,

Paris, Rome, Constantinople, Moscow, Calcutta, Canton or Peking; see the gorgeous temples, with turrets and spires pointing to heaven; observe the stupendous machinery of worship, designed to honor what they call God. One can but ask, "Where God in heaven is thus provided for and glorified, how intelligent, how pure, how well clothed, fed and housed—how happy, noble and divine—must man on earth be?" But, visit the lanes and alleys, the courts and prisons; visit the slave-ship, the slave-auction and slave-plantation; visit the armies, navies, and battle scenes, of earth; see that gathering, gaping, eager multitude—a man or woman is to be hung; enter the habitations of earth's toiling millions, and see them naked, starved, without education and the means of subsistence; and thou wilt ask—Is it possible that God, on earth, can be so despised and trodden under foot, by those who so gorgeously decorate him in heaven! Even so; they enslave, hang, scourge, mutilate and dishonor God in man, to get means to adorn him in heaven. The sighs and groans of earth's outraged and bereaved millions, mingle with the prayers and songs of praise that ascend to God in heaven.

Is it not time to cease to worship a god that dwells apart from all human affairs, and to begin to honor that Divinity who dwells in man, on earth? To cease, to waste our love and sympathy, on an unseen, intangible abstraction, and to concentrate them all on our fellow beings, to purify, elevate and save them? I believe it is; the worship of God, as it has hitherto been carried on, has left the poor to pine in poverty, the ignorant in his ignorance; the drunkard to perish in his delirium, and the slave in his chains; the victims of war to weep and die in their blood, their tears and anguish, and the complicated woes and wounds of humanity unsoothed and unheeded. Let us cease to expend our energies on that which they cannot profit, and adore that God who is enthroned on earth in man.

**ATHEISM!** What is it? A denial of the popular notions of God. God is practically, to each one, what he conceives him to be. This morning, I find the highest conception of God, entertained by the people of Ohio, is, that he is a Being who delights in *human* sacrifices. I deny the existence of any such God! I am denounced as an atheist. I am so to their conceptions of Divinity. But I go to work to convert Ohio to my views. And, lo! what was atheism in the morning, is theism in the evening. To-morrow morning they think God delights in animal sacrifices. Again, I deny the existence of any such Being, and again I am an atheist; and again the people are converted to my views, and become in the evening what they denounced, as atheists, in the morning. So the next morning, they think God delights in slavery, war, death-penalty, holy days, outward forms and ceremonies, polygamy and concubinage, and in governments of violence and blood. I deny there is any *such* God; and again I am called an atheist, and again what was atheism in the morning, is embraced as sacred truth in the evening. So human beings progress, and ever will progress in their conceptions of God;

and that, in proportion as they improve in their views of the nature, relations, and duties of man to man. It is the almost universal sentiment of mankind, that, human beings may slaughter one another, when, in their view, this becomes necessary to their own safety, or to the honor of what they worship as God. On this is based all the governments of the world, and on this rest war and slavery. While man is thus accustomed to regard his brother as a being whom, at any moment, he may be called upon to blot out from human existence, how can men be brought to respect one another? It is idle to preach to men about living to the glory of God, while their assumed right to kill men, for any cause, is allowed. Men cannot look to God with holy and loving reverence, while they go about in society as the personification of death and corruption to their fellow men. Those who most earnestly advocate the sanctity of man, most devotedly plead for the holiness of God; those who do most to make man loved and respected, most effectually promote the glory of their Creator. But the policy of the Church and Clergy is to keep the world stationary, where the Jews were, in their conceptions of God. If we reject what they called God, *i. e.*, their *ideas of God*, we are denounced by them as atheists. But we cannot be stationary on this matter. Man's conceptions of the Eternal will ever grow purer, clearer, higher in unending progression; but only so far as his views of himself and his fellow men become so. Jesus and the apostles were atheists to the Gods of the nations around them. Christians are atheists in the view of Hindoos, and Hindoos in the view of Christians; Catholics in the view of Protestants, and *vice versa*; abolitionists and slaveholders, non-resistants and warriors in the opinion of one another. Indeed, each man is, in some respects, an atheist to the divinity of each and every other. But few are found, whose views of the Divine perfectly harmonize. Men's views of their own nature, relations and duties, differ; but wouldst thou say that because my views of man differ from thine, I deny my own existence and that of my fellow beings? So in regard to the Deity; it would be false and unjust to call a man an atheist merely because he denies the truth of our conceptions of God. Yet this is the common meaning of the word. He is called an atheist who denies the popular notions of God; as he is denounced as an infidel who rejects the common views of the Bible. Men have been denounced, imprisoned and put to death, as infidels, because they asserted that the earth was round, and moved around the sun; because they denied the divine right of kings and governments of violence and blood; and because they denied the right to hang witches, to burn heretics, to compel men to support a religion in which they did not believe, and because they assert that women have as good a right as men have to be heard in Church and State, and to take an equal part in making and administering the laws and institutions under which they are to live and to which they are to be held responsible. So men are now denounced as *infidels* for their opposition to war, death-penalty, slavery, to governments of violence, and for pleading that every

human being has an equal claim to the earth, and to the fruits of his own labor. Assert that no man can rightfully own man as property, and you are accused of denying the Bible; say that no man can have a just title to any more of the earth's surface than he can use, and you are called an enemy to God and order. Let no one fear to be called an infidel or an atheist.

H. C. W.

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## LETTER VIII.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 21, 1850.

*Dear L.*—Before me is the substance of a conversation with thee, on THEOLOGY, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. As I read it over, it revives in me pleasant, and only pleasant, memories of thee, in connection with that relic of the past—that huge pile of consecrated stone and mortar. Pleasant and profitable to me was that interchange of thoughts on subjects naturally suggested by the place, and the witnesses around us. I spent several years of the most buoyant and ardent portion of my life, studying what is called Theology. The following letter, in substance, is taken from my journal, written in connection with our visits to Westminster Abbey, and its cloisters. Our conversation on the science of God, related solely to its connection with the relations and duties of man to man. How many laborers were despoiled of their earnings; how many children were left uneducated; how many hearts were made sad and desolate, to obtain means to rear that fabric. And for what? Ostensibly to honor God; but, in fact, to be used mainly as a sepulcher for England's titled and royal robbers and murderers. What connection can such a place have with the being and attributes of a God of love and justice, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands?

THEOLOGY.—What is it? As generally understood, it is the science of that unseen, intangible something, which man calls God. Men analyze that something; arrange its attributes, establish its relations, decide on its likes and dislikes, define its power, and put in scientific orders, all they suppose to make up God, and call that their theology. In making out this science of God, their thoughts rest on nothing visible or tangible, but on a mere abstraction—a compound idea—an image existing, perchance, nowhere, except in their own brain. This idea may, or may not, accord with the real Author of nature. God, as he practically exists in the mind of each and every human being, is a per-

sonification of all which he thinks to be true, just and right. Slaveholders and warriors combine whatever they think is true in principle, and right and just in practice; and that combination is, in all particulars, expanded to infinity, and adored as Divine. This must necessarily be the case with us when we attempt to form an idea of God, aside from man. We can only personify all that we think is true, pure, wise and potent, and regard that combination as our Divinity. A Mohammedan's views of truth, purity and justice, enter into his conceptions of God. So do the Hindoo's, the Indian's, and the Cannibal's. So, whatever the professed Christian deems to be right and duty, enters into his conceptions of God. For instance: in the mind of a professedly Christian slaveholder, slavery, with all its array of whips, chains, slave-auctions and slave-driving, enters into his idea of God, as an essential ingredient; and to touch slavery, or any of its elements, is to touch his God. In the minds of professedly Christian warriors, and their apologists, war, with its array of swords and guns, of battles and butcheries, its sieges and bombardments, its burning cities and desolated fields, its men, women and children, torn to pieces; its widows and orphans; its tears and woes, and unutterable anguish; together with its glitter and glory, enters into their idea of God; and to speak against war, or any of its essential principles or practices, is to speak against the object of their deepest and holiest veneration and worship, in which is hid their life, their heaven. In the view of a Presbyterian, a holy sabbath, a holy book, water baptism, communion, oral stated prayer, a church organization and a priest, a presbytery, a synod and general assembly, combine to make up the object of his worship; and in the mind of a Catholic, the mass, the confessional, the cross, holy water, a priest, a pope and a purgatory, enter into his conceptions of Divinity; and to touch any of these, is to commit sacrilege against the object of Presbyterian or Catholic worship. So, in the mind of an advocate of the divinity of human government, a government in the hands of men, with all its array of prisons, gallows and guillotines, of armies and navies, its congresses and parliaments, courts and magistrates, is an essential element of his divinity; and to deny the rightful existence of an army, navy or gallows, and the right of man to dictate law to his equal brother, and to punish him if he disobeys, is to deny his God.

Thus, in the mind of each one, his conception of God, as a Being possessing moral attributes, is made up of all the principles and practices which he deems true and right; and, in fact, to attack whatever any man thinks true and just, is to attack his God.

In all ages and nations, men have shown far more zeal in defense of their gods, than in defense of their fellow beings, and been more solicitous to furnish them with splendid temples to dwell in, than to build comfortable abodes for the houseless and homeless children of men. See how those who call themselves Christians, have sought to maintain the honor of their God! They have poured out rivers of human blood, to glorify their God. They have cultivated wrath and revenge toward men, to attest their love and devotion to God. They profane and desecrate man, and do what they can to make him poor ignorant and contemptible, that they may show their regard for God. They cry out, "Come, see our zeal for our God," and turn and bathe their hands in the heart's blood of men, women and children. How long shall men thus enslave and murder men, whom they have seen, to honor God, whom they have not seen?

What a hideous compound of contradictions is that which men call God! How can it be otherwise, so long as they go out into the regions of abstraction, and attempt to delineate his intellectual and moral character, without reference to the fixed laws and principles of man's physical and social nature? There is no conceivable outrage upon man, which has not found a sanctuary in what its perpetrators and abettors call God. Piracy, persecution, drunkenness, polygamy and prostitution, robbery, rapine and murder, human sacrifices and cannibalism, have found the citadel of their strength, in the bosom of what those who do and abet these deeds, worship as their divinity. A Puritan priest (Ward of Ipswich, Mass.) said, not two hundred years ago, that to tolerate divers religions in the State, was to hang God's Bible on the devil's girdle; and nearly the entire Church and priesthood then held the same view. In the opinion of the Puritans, it was their God who hung the Quakers and witches, and slaughtered the Pequod, Narraganset and Wampanoag Indians, to make way for his chosen people, *i. e.*, the Puritans. In the view of the Catholics and the Pope, their God, by the hand of Cortez and Pizarro, exterminated the Mexicans and Peruvians, to make room for his peculiar people, *i. e.*, the Catholics. In the estimation of Mohammedans, their God, by the hand of Tamerlane, conquered thirty-seven kingdoms, slaughtering or enslaving their inhabitants, to show favor to his chosen people, *i. e.*, Mohammedans. And in the opinion of Jews, their God, by the hand of Moses and Joshua, slaughtered the men, women and infant children of Canaan, "leaving not a soul that breatheth," to prepare a habitation and a home for his "peculiar people," *i. e.*, the Jews. "*Peculiar*," indeed, were the people and the divinity, that could perpetrate such



outrages upon nature and nature's God! My soul, come not thou into their councils.

Who cannot call to mind facts to illustrate the truth of the assertion, that every outrage upon the physical and social nature of man, has derived its most potent support from what their perpetrators and abettors call God? Twenty-five years ago, men began to practice and advocate abstinence from alcoholic drinks. It was demonstrated that alcohol is a deadly enemy to the physical and social nature of man. But God was brought in to sanction the custom of drinking it, and those who were opposed to its use were denounced as enemies of God. About the same time, Wm. Lloyd Garrison first assaulted slavery as a violation of natural law—an unchangeable wrong, that no being can make right. Slavery took refuge in the bosom of what slaveholders and their allies, in Church and State, call God; and when the champion of freedom pursued the demon into this his last retreat, and sought to slay him there, clinging to the very horns of the altar, almost the entire nation denounced and mobbed him and his associates as atheists; which, indeed, they were, to that god who can shelter such a monster crime in his bosom. It was a daring deed to pursue slavery into this tower of its strength. But few had courage to do it. Thousands turned away backward, when they saw it taken under what was called *Divine* protection. A split in the anti-slavery ranks was the result. There were those who saw that a being that could shelter such an evil in his bosom, was no God of justice and love. They denied his existence and authority, and boldly sought to sacrifice slavery, and what slaveholders and their allies called God, on the altar of justice and humanity. So, when non-resistants attacked war, as an outrage upon nature and nature's God; as a wrong that never was, and never can be, right; when they denied that men ever did, or can, rightfully take human life, they were denounced by the advocates and perpetrators of war and death-penalty, as enemies to their god. So they were; for war and capital punishment are essential elements of existence in their god. The Revolutionary, Seminole and Mexican wars, are all part and parcel of the being whom their perpetrators and abettors worship as Divine. Thus, every crime against nature finds refuge in the bosom of what men have called, and do call, God.

What a frightful compound is that which is worshiped as God, by the slaveholding and war-making Church and clergy of this nation! Slavery and liberty, war and peace, violence and love, revenge and forgiveness, injustice and justice, vice and virtue, falsehood and truth, pollution and purity, piracy

and piety, murder and mercy—every conceivable evil, mixed up with every conceivable good, and all put together and made into a huge monster, before whom the nation, in Church and State, prostrates itself in adoration, and says, "This be thy god, oh, Christian America!" To this compound of contradictions, the priests and churches build and dedicate temples, pray and sing, consecrate times and places, and offer sacrifices in various ways. They call on us all to receive and worship this bundle of absurdities—this almighty guardian of war, slavery, and every wrong—as the true and living God and Father of men. The science of this frightful combination of truth and falsehood—of good and evil—is taught in seminaries, pulpits, churches and sabbath-schools, as THEOLOGY—as the science of God. As well cast all the contents of an apothecary's shop into a laboratory, mix them together, and offer the compound to mankind, as a panacea for all diseases. Such a god can never break the rod of the oppressor, nor hush the tumult of war.

I turn, with sadness and indignation, from what this nation calls God. It has been the blight and mildew of my life, and made it all but a total failure. The earnest longings of my nature after truth, have been crushed by it. Love and sympathy for my kind have been perverted, or utterly destroyed by it. It has palsied all the joyous energies of my nature, bound my soul in chains of adamant error and superstition, abused faith, blighted affection, extinguished hope, victimized my social and moral nature to a phantom, and hung around the universe the pall of death. Everlasting thanks to the just and benevolent Author of my being, the chain that bound me to the car of that monster is broken; my soul is free from his power. His existence I deny; his power I defy. While my soul goes out in all-hoping, all-confiding, all-enduring love and heart-felt devotion, to the Divinity that is manifested in just and pure-minded human beings, of whatever color, creed, country or condition; while I would be a follower after God as a child, walking in love and fraternity with all of human kind, my spirit recoils with horror, from that phantom god, whose only value to men is, to serve as an almighty convenience to the crimes of his worshipers. To that God who dwells in man, to bind the human race together in love and brotherhood, will I bow my soul in adoration, and to none other.

Henceforth, anthropology shall be my theology. The science of man is the science of God. The latter can never safely be separated from the former. God cannot be separated from man, in our *practical* conceptions of him. He that best understands the science of man, best knows the science of God. Better, infin-

itely better, had it been for our race, had the money, time and talent, which have been expended in the study of theology, been spent in the study of anthropology. We can learn nothing of God, by making him a direct subject of thought and investigation. In no way can we successfully seek after God, and inquire into his nature and attributes, except by inquiring into the nature, relations and duties of man to man. We can know nothing of the invisible and intangible, except through the visible and tangible. Seminaries, professors and books of *theology*, should, and will, ere long, change their name and object. They should all make man the *direct subject* of investigation, and ever keep in mind, that, in proportion as they discover, elucidate and develop to man a knowledge of himself, they instruct him in the knowledge of his God.

“Do not thy views lead to idolatry?” was thy anxious query as we conversed in the foregoing strain in that dark old abbey. We are forbidden, thou sayest, to make to ourselves any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in the heavens above or the earth beneath? True; God is a Spirit, and is to be worshiped with a true and faithful spirit. To worship him thus we must associate him with something. Men conceive of the Deity in two ways: (1) in the *abstract*; (2) in the *concrete*. What difference between the two? Try to think of the Author of thy being aside from all his works. On what do thy thoughts rest? What is in thy mind? On what do thy thoughts rest when thou art thinking of power, wisdom, intelligence, goodness, truth, justice, love, mercy, aside from all connection with human beings and their relations and duties? We can talk of justice, truth, &c., but, when we attempt to think of them aside from human relations and duties, the mind grasps a shadow. We embody them, or associate them with something in our thoughts, or there is no life, no practical reality. So, when we attempt to think of God, we can have no distinct idea of being without form or locality. My deep conviction is that the Creator of all things exists aside from, and independent of, me and of the universe with which I am connected; but I can have no conception of him aside from myself and my fellow men. When we do attempt to think of him thus, our thoughts rest on an image in our own minds. Man is never more truly an idolater than when he exhausts the energies of his soul in devotion to an abstract idea, or image, which he calls God. He worships an abstraction; compounded, indeed, of all that he conceives to be just, loveable, true, beautiful, powerful and wise; yet, his love and devotion are expended on an abstraction, which may be as different and distinct from the Au-

thor of our being, as are the hideous images of the Hindoo worship.

But men have ever embodied their ideas of the divine in something. They have associated God with the sun, a river, and fire; with brute beasts; with images of wood and stone; with a day, a house, a book, an ordinance, a title, and an institution; and the sight of these objects suggests to them thoughts of God and his government. I would have all the energies now expended in worshiping God in such things, turned into another channel and expended in love and devotion to man. Let husbands and wives adore the Divinity in an entire consecration of soul in love and devotion to one another's purity and perfection in all that is true, just, wise and good; let parents concentrate their souls on their children to nurture in them all that is loveable and to extinguish all that is hateful: so let children do to their parents, brothers to sisters and sisters to brothers, and man to man over all the earth. Thus to worship the Divine in the human, would bring joy and redemption to the crushed and bleeding hearts of earth. How sweet and endearing, how full of rapture and glory, would then be all human relations! How full of God would be human life!

IDLATRY.—Dost thou caution me against idolizing any human being? My soul must idolize something; must have something on which to exhaust its entire love and devotion. So must every one. Wouldst thou have me concentrate my energies on the bible, the sabbath, a meeting house, a cathedral, a ceremony, and adore God in them? Shall I yield up my soul in love and devotion to an abstraction, an image, or phantom of my own imagination? In doing this I spend my strength for naught. No hungry are fed, no naked are clothed, no tears are wiped away, no crushed spirits are cheered, no slaves are redeemed, no wars and contentions are stayed, by worshiping God in connection with such things. The very persons who are most zealous in this kind of worship, are often those who do most to fill the earth with lamentation and woe.

What then shall I do? On what shall I expend my love and devotion? What shall I *idolize*? For I must idolize something. I must have a God; and that object of my supreme worship, my highest and holiest adoration, must be associated with something that is visible and tangible. I will love and adore the Divine in the human; and will expend my soul's highest energies in worshiping the Divine by seeking to bring the human into perfect harmony with love, with God.

Chataubriand once said, "Christianity comes to enthrone God in heaven, and abolish slavery on earth." He was mistaken, I

think ; its mission is to enthrone God on earth, in human hearts ; to show us how we may dwell in God by dwelling in all-hoping, all-confiding, all-absorbing love to one another. Wilt thou tell me God ever took away a wife because she was idolized by her husband ; or a child because it was idolized by its parents ? Wilt thou tell me God ever took away any human being because he or she was too much loved by friends and relatives ? I can receive no such doctrine. On the contrary ; the more entirely we love our fellow beings, or any one of them, and the more supremely we are devoted to their good, the more are we devoted to God, and the more pleasing are we in his sight. No offering can be so sweet and acceptable to God, as the entire blending of human souls in love and devotion to one another.

Many, very many, die for want of human love and sympathy. They long unutterably, to impart their deep love and devotion to others ; and to absorb the souls of others into themselves. They long to share the joys and sorrows of others, and to have others share theirs. Each and every human being pines for one in whom he or she can live, and who will live in them, and blend his or her existence with theirs. Each seeks to love and to be loved. But how often is the soul repulsed in its earnest longings for companionship ? It seeks an object on whom to exhaust its energies in love and devotion ; but, by coldness and indifference, is driven back on itself to be crushed and consumed in silence and loneliness. Talk of God's killing human beings because they are loved too well, and to punish those whose affections twine around them in fond devotion. There never was a more stupendous falsehood concocted by the world's priesthood. Millions die because they are loved too little ; not one because they are loved too much. We cannot love any human being too devotedly. The more entirely we concentrate the energies of our souls in pure love and devotion to a human being ; the more profitable and pleasing will be our devotion to God. Love to a fellow being, never did any injury, and never gave offense to him who is love. But those who father death upon God, must give a reason for his conduct when, as they say, he kills those who are fondly loved. They can find no better excuse for their death-dealing Divinity, than to say, he killed them because they were loved too well, and to punish us for loving them ! Better no excuse than one that makes him out a malignant monster ! Kill a wife, or a child, because they are loved too well ! Wring a husband's or father's soul with anguish, because he loved his wife or child too devotedly ! But this is in keeping with the character of him whom they worship as God. But how different from him who is love

and justice: and who is worshiped by men most devoutly, when they love one another most supremely!

H. C. W.

## LETTER IX.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, *January 22*, 1850.

*Dear L.*—It is thy wish to know my view of *Death, Retribution and Immortality*. I will tell thee briefly; but I shall speak of these, as I have of the *Bible*, of *Marriage* and of *God*, only as they are made conducive to the support of war, slavery and other outrages upon natural justice and equity, and as they are made to stand in the way of human progress.

DEATH.—What is it? Not a mere change in the mode of our existence. To pass from this into another state, in obedience to natural law, and *without pain*, is not death, as it is commonly understood. When the caterpillar passes into the butterfly state, by the operation of natural law, it is not death; it is life—higher life. So, if man, by the action of natural law, were to pass from this to another state, it would not be death, but higher life. I have shown that the Author of our being designed to carry us from this to another state, and onward through all the changes through which we are destined to pass forever, and to work out all his purposes respecting us, by the agency of fixed and just laws, that are interwoven into our nature, and never by miraculous or arbitrary interposition. If these laws were unimpeded, they would bring us into existence, carry us through all changes, in endless progression, without bodily or mental suffering to ourselves, or to others.

But death is an evil, and always associated with pain and sorrow. All pain proceeds from a violation of natural law, in the sufferer, or in some other person or thing. Life is the law; death, a violation of it—no matter by whom it is inflicted. I agree with thee, that human life is sacred, and never to be taken as a penalty, nor in defense. Of course, war, slavery, and all governments and institutions that are based on the assumed right in man to take human life, must be wrong. But the advocates of war and death-penalty say, *God kills men—therefore, men may kill one another*. Death is the executive power of God's government over men; therefore, men may make it the executive power of their dominion over one another. God has a right to inflict death on

man, for such offenses, and by such instrumentalities, as he pleases: by the elements, by disease, by wild beasts or by man. It is said that our relations to God are such that he, without any violation of justice or equity, may command us to kill our children, our brothers and sisters, our friends or ourselves; and that if God commands us to cut our own throats, or the throats of innocent men, women or children, we are bound to obey; and that we sin if we refuse.

This argument, for the infliction of death as a defense or penalty, must be met. It is an objection to the inviolability of human life which ought to be answered, if it can be; if not, let the opponents of war and death-penalty, as sins against nature and nature's God, cease to talk of these as moral evils. How canst thou answer it? I answer it simply by the assertion that God never did, and never will, inflict death on man. Let those who say he does, prove it. I believe that he rules man by fixed laws, engraven on their bodies and souls, and never by arbitrary laws and penalties. Death, as an evil, associated with pain, results from violations of these laws, and never from obedience to them. Where death is, I see the hand of man, or of some agency that violates the law of life; but never do I see in death the agency of God. To pass from this to another state, as God designed we should, is no violation of the law of life. The body, without pain, falls and returns whence it came.

But thou sayest, "*man dies.*" True; but who *kills him*? This is the question. Let those who say God does, show proof. It is certain that the agency of man can be seen in a large portion of the deaths among men. Is it a violation of natural law for man to kill himself? I think it is; so dost thou; and no conceivable argument could possibly convince thee or me that the Author of our being ever did, or can, consistently with his own nature, and with the laws under which he has placed us, require us to inflict death upon ourselves, for any cause, or in any manner. As well say, that God gives us two eyes, and then requires us to put them out—or two arms or legs, and then requires us to cut them off—as to say, he gives us life, and then requires us to destroy it. If, then, it be an outrage upon nature, for a man to kill himself, no matter at whose instigation, or by what means, then it must be so for him to kill another; for we cannot rightfully possess a power over another which we have not over ourselves. If it would be an outrage upon nature for the Deity to command a man to kill himself, how much more so to require him to kill another? If the Creator of man cannot, without violating his own nature, require us to violate the law of life in our own

persons, he cannot in the persons of others. In no conceivable case can man take human life without wrong. No matter what arguments are presented to prove the divine origin of a commission to take the life of man, I would reject them rather than believe that our Creator ever sanctioned a deed so unnatural, and, of course, so opposed to nature's God.

But thou sayest, "Men die by diseases. In these cases, who inflicts death upon them?" Not the Author of life; he never sent disease into a human body. Cholera, fevers, consumption and all diseases to which our bodies are subject, whether the disease be inherited or introduced into the system after birth, are the result of human agency, ignorantly or intentionally put forth. The laws of man's physical nature have been violated, in all cases of disease. It never results from laws obeyed and unimpeded in their operations. God, indeed, fixed the order of nature, and made it impossible for man to violate that order, ignorantly or willfully, without suffering; but he never instigates to such violation, nor surrounds men with circumstances which render it necessary for them to transgress.

But thy inquiry is, "When men are destroyed by tempests, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and other convulsions of the elements, who kills them?" Again I answer, not the Author of nature. He never sent a thunderbolt, a flood or an earthquake, to kill men. He did, indeed, arrange that order which results in such convulsions. Fire, water, air and earth, are under fixed and just laws. These laws send lightning from the clouds, let loose tornadoes, floods and volcanoes; but not to kill men. God did not put the man in the way of the thunderbolt which struck him down. Had he kept out of the way, he had been unhurt. God no more works miracles to save men from the results of their ignorance, than he does to punish them for wickedness. He never suspends the laws of nature to avert danger from men, and save them from suffering and death; nor did he, nor will he, ever do it to inflict these evils upon them. The law of gravitation brings a decayed tree to the ground. A man is there and is killed. Who killed him? The tree. What felled the tree? The law of gravitation. Who arranged that? God. What then? Had the man not been there, he had not been killed. Who put him there? God did not, unless it can be shown that he does all that man does, and that he is responsible for all human actions; which, in truth, is a legitimate and necessary inference from the popular doctrine, that he works out his designs, touching man, by arbitrary laws and penalties.

About half of all who are born die under five years of age; and



thirty years is the average age of man. This slaughter of the human race, I believe, must be traced to human agency, ignorantly or intentionally exerted. Canst thou believe that it would be the natural result of the laws under which we exist, if they were obeyed and unimpeded in their operations? Man is so made that he cannot live without brains, a throat, lungs and heart. His heart or lungs are pierced with a dagger; his throat is cut, or his brains blown out. Who kills him? Does God? As truly as when men die with diseases that result from human agency.

Those who father the woes, the suffering and death, of this world upon their God, make him out to be the personification of folly or malevolence. It would be as just to exhort a man in a fit of gout or delirium tremens, to submit to God, as the Author of his sufferings, as to exhort the victim of cholera or fever to such submission. No man should be told to bless God when sickness or death comes upon himself or friends. As well might we bless him for slavery and war as for suffering and death; for the latter are as truly the work of man as the former, and have no more right to be in the world. I would say, sternly resist the agency that fills the earth with lamentation and woe, in whatever forms it shows itself.

When man assumes the right to inflict death on man, by any instrumentality, he assumes a power never assumed nor exercised by the Creator. This truth will be developed and better understood, as anthropology is made a subject of careful study. As men come to understand their nature, and their relations and obligations to one another, and to the Author of their being, they will view, with grief and horror, this outrage upon man, which has made the earth a human slaughter house. It will be seen and felt, that the spirit in man which could prompt him to war against the life of man, would prompt him to war against the life of God. God, in men's minds, will be identified with man in all their thoughts and affections; and any outrage done to the one, will be considered as done to the other. Then, and not till then, will there be "peace on earth and good will among men;" then will "violence no more be heard in our land, nor wasting and destruction in our borders," and "men will learn war no more."

RETRIBUTION.—Thy inquiry is, "Dost thou believe in it?" I do; but not as it is generally understood. The common idea is, that this is a state of probation, and not of retribution; but that, after this life, man is to be arraigned, tried, sentenced and executed, if found guilty: the condemnation and execution not to take place at all here, but only yonder. Judgment, as I conceive, takes

place here and yonder too ; and just as truly, and in the same way, in one state, as in the other.

I inflict a wound upon my body with a knife, or with alcohol. I am instantly summoned to judgment, tried, condemned and punished. The judge and the executioner are in my brains, my lungs, my heart, my stomach ; in every vein, artery, nerve and muscle of my body ; and when any part of that body is wounded, ignorantly or otherwise, I am instantly called to account, and made to suffer as a sinner, or a victim. So in our social nature. If that is wounded, there is a judge and executioner in that portion of our being, which instantly takes cognizance of the injury, and deals with us according as the case may be. Whether I violate my social nature intentionally or not, I must suffer.

The same process will go on forever—no matter whether we are in this state or another. The only retribution to which we shall ever be subjected, under the divine government, is that which treads close upon the heels of the transgression. The violation of the law is the penalty, and the man who commits the offense inflicts the suffering. All God's accounts are settled with each individual, as he goes on in the progress of life. Nothing is left for future retribution. Of all moral evils, the most fatal and terrible result to the perpetrator, is *the injury done to his moral nature*. This is frightfully manifest in the prostration of the social and moral nature of the people of this nation. It is so paralyzed that they can look on the crimes of slavery, not merely with indifference, but with approbation ; and have the effrontery to claim to be honest and Christian men, and lovers of liberty, while they enslave and turn into merchandise three millions of human beings ! And is not that retribution ? What greater punishment can be inflicted ? The day will come, in the history of our race, in which the transgressor against the laws of his social and moral being, will account no retribution so terrible as the injury which sin does to this part of his nature.

See the frightful effects of *war* and *death-penalty* on our moral nature. It so perverts conscience, obfuscates reason, blights affection, blunts sympathy, and palsies all the moral energies of the soul, that men and women not only become indifferent to wholesale plunder and murder, but they glory in deeds of blood and carnage, and claim the highest honors and emoluments man can bestow on man, for those who commit these atrocities.

Would that this motive, as a preventive of social wrong, were urged on men, instead of that usually brought from another state. The true Gehenna, the fire that is not quenched, the worm that

dieth not, is that death to the life of God in the soul, which follows social wrongs, to those who perpetrate them. We need not talk to warmakers and oppressors of man and woman, of every name and grade, about dying and going to judgment; for, verily, they receive the reward of their evil deeds as they perpetrate them.

ETERNITY.—Dost thou ask what I think of it? Simply, that it is egregious folly and error, to talk of leaving this world and going into eternity, as though we were not in it now. I believe we are born in eternity, and have ever lived in it; we are educated, and have ever moved and had our being in it, and shall ever live in it; no more truly, however, after we leave this state than we do now. The only difference being, now we have bodies; then—I know not what will be our form; only I am confident of a conscious existence, as to my social, intellectual and moral powers, and my capacity for happiness or misery, for well doing or evil doing. In that state, I think we shall have social wants, which nothing but the society, the love and sympathy of the loving, and kindred spirits of fellow beings, can satisfy; and that we shall then know God and commune with him, as we do here; *i. e.*, through the medium of his works; and especially through the nature we shall then possess, and through the laws, under which it will then be placed, and our relations and obligations to one another. We shall then worship the true, the just, the beautiful and divine, in one another, as we ought to do here; and not in the abstract, as we most unwisely, and fatally do here.

Dost thou talk to men about preparing for eternity? I have done so; but shall do so no more, not as men generally understand it. In this sense I do not wish to see men preparing for another state; I had rather see them laboring to prepare to live rightly here. I would have them so busy in improving each passing hour, that they should have no time to prepare for eternity. I would say to thee, improve the present, live as thou shouldst live, and do the duties of each passing hour and day; give thy sympathies, thy affections, thy kindness, thy thoughts, and all the best energies of thy soul, to thy fellow beings who live around thee, and who can be benefited by them, and eternity, as men call the future state, will take care of itself. Fulfill the object of thy being here, obey its laws, and as the future comes up to be the present, rightfully improve it, and give thyself no anxiety about the future till it comes to be present, and then grapple with it and execute the work it brings to thee, and the "well done good and faithful servant" will be thine.

Religions, founded on arbitrary, direct revelation, are ever

exhorting men to prepare for death, judgment and eternity ; in which preparation are not included men's feelings and actions toward one another in this life. As taught by the Church and clergy and governments of Christendom and Heathendom, men may enslave, and murder one another and commit any and every outrage upon man's social nature and relations, and, all the while, be making suitable preparations on a magnificent scale for death, judgment and eternity. Prepare for death ? Men should prepare for life ; for its loves, its sympathies, its forgivenesses, its kindnesses, and all its relations and duties, and blend all the vital energies of their social nature to this one end. Prepare for life, here ; to live in love and harmony with all around thee ; love as thou wouldst be loved ; forgive as thou wouldst be forgiven ; respect the persons and rights of others as thou wouldst have thine respected ; be to thy fellow beings what thou wouldst have them be to thee ; see and worship the Divine in the human ; maintain love and communion with God, by loving and communing with men, and thus live and move in him by living and moving in and for them, and then wouldst thou be prepared for life. And is not this to prepare for the future ? How truly do I know from experience, that this is thy preparation for life and for all its changes in the limitless future. Sweetest memories will forever cluster around thy kindness ! Thus would I exhort all to prepare for life, and then they need not bestow an anxious thought on death, judgment or eternity.

But *prepare for death*, is the ceaseless watch-word sounded out from the pulpit to all the people. And, sure enough, the people and priests do prepare for death—at any rate, for inflicting it on themselves and others. “Prepare for judgment and eternity,” is the pealing cry from the church, and the people obey with a vengeance, by hurrying themselves and all around them into another state to begin their career there, before they have begun to do the work for which they were sent here ; to enter upon life in another state ere they had begun to *live* in this.

No one can be prepared to enter upon the next stage of his being till he has accomplished his mission here, and perfected himself according to the design of his Creator. No child is prepared to enter upon existence in this life, till it has accomplished its destiny, in the state in which it existed previous to its birth, and if it is born before its time, it is but on abortion—violence is done to it, and it enters on its independent existence, prematurely, deformed, feeble, sickly, and wholly unfitted to appreciate the blessings, to bear the burdens, to perform the duties, and act its part in that life on which it enters at birth. So when any human being passes

from this into the next state before his social, intellectual, and moral nature has perfected itself here according to the design of its author—before the laws of his present being have had time to work out for him the elevation and glory which God intended they should—his birth into that new state is premature: he enters upon that life as an abortion—he begins it in a weak and helpless state, totally incompetent to perform its duties, to enjoy its blessings, or appreciate its glories.

How do slaveholders, warriors and their abettors, enter upon that state, whether they pass away in youth, manhood or old age? They have not only not given their social and spiritual nature opportunity to work out for them the highest designed good in this state, but they have lived in habitual violation of that nature, done all they could to make it work out for them and for all others the greatest amount of degradation and wretchedness—they have not only done nothing to accomplish their high and mighty mission on earth, but done all in their power to defeat it. They must enter on another state, not dwarfs, but huge, deformed monsters. Their birth into that life, cannot be hailed with joy by the pure and good that are there—but grief and pity must fill every heart, and sadness cloud every radiant countenance to see them come among them.

Does God carry man onward and upward by fixed laws? Then these fixed laws of our social nature must work out for us, in the present, our only preparation for the future. Our business is to see to it, that no obstacles are allowed to impede the natural operations of these laws; that our social and spiritual nature has a fair chance to work out for us the designs of our Creator. Take every stumbling block out of the way, which war, slavery, government, and any other wrongs, in Church and State, have put in the way of nature. Let ministers and churches set themselves, in earnest, to search out and obtain clear, definite views of the laws of our nature, and to urge people to obey them, and show them that no true and effectual preparation for another state, is possible to those who oppress and wrong men, legally or illegally, judicially or extra-judicially; that no prayers, no ordinances, no sacrifices, no priesthoods, no churches, no bibles, can save them, and prepare them for the future, while they violate, no matter by whose permission or authority, the persons of men or women.

H. C. W.

## LETTER X.

PENMAEN, *Ohio, January 24, 1850.*

*Dear L.*—Many places in England, Scotland and Ireland, and in the countries of continental Europe, are associated with thee. I have communed with thee on the subjects of the foregoing letters. While we differed in our views, not a discordant feeling ever disturbed the sweet harmony of our intercourse. So it should ever be: differences of opinion should never produce alienation of heart.

Where ought man to go to learn the nature, relations and duties, of man? How often has this been discussed between us, as we have conversed on the religious and political customs and institutions of Europe, and the condition of her millions of laborers! Must we go to *man* or to *God*? To God, is the answer that comes up from universal Christendom, and from all other lands. God, by arbitrary revelation to men of the past or present, must tell us what is man, or we can know nothing of him. So says the popular religion of mankind. But my answer is, to *man*, and to man alone. Where wouldst thou go to learn the nature of the *oak*? To God? No; but to the oak itself: Where to learn the nature of the eye? To God? No; but to the eye itself. Why not go to man's social nature to learn what are his social relations and duties? We should, I think, and no where else. When we consult the oak, we consult God, as to the nature of that tree; so, when we go to man to learn what are his relations and duties, we go to God in the only way in which we can go to him to get instruction in regard to these matters. From man alone can we derive any valuable information respecting his nature, relations and duties; and when we study into the facts and laws under which he exists, we are seeking unto God in the only safe way in which we can do it. God teaches through his works, and in no other way. I would call thee, and all others, to the great fact, that *to the work of God alone* must we go to learn the nature of that work; and those who seek to learn the relations and duties of man by dreams, visions, direct inspirations or arbitrary revelations, are deceived. They spend their strength for nought. Let them concentrate all their thoughts on the physical and social nature of man, and there learn what he is and what he ought to be. It is here, and here alone, that God communicates with us as to what we are and ought to be.

But, in all our inquiries we have looked to the bearing of all the subjects of our investigations on the wrongs and out-

rages perpetrated under the forms of governments and religions, and the sanction of arbitrary revelations, laws and customs, upon the rights and persons of men and women. I will notice, in this, two or three more of these subjects, that bear powerfully on the character and condition of social man in this life—the only aspect in which I care to look at any thing. While I glory in immortality as my birth-right inheritance; while my soul exults as it speeds its flight in a course of unending progression, and in its conscious assurance of life, pure and fadeless as the life of God, yet, I have no practical existence in the future till it comes to me as the *present*. While here, I would look at all things in their bearing on man's present nature and relations.

One of thy requests is, "Tell me all about thyself in regard to the *Atonement*." I will, so far as I can in a brief space. By atonement, I mean a reconciliation made, where there had been a disagreement—the bringing of two opposing persons or principles into harmony. I injure thee; an atonement is made; *i. e.*, I become reconciled to thee, and thou to me. I violate my own physical or social nature. Atonement is made; *i. e.*, I return to my obedience and become reconciled to the laws of my being. Man violates his own nature, and, of course, sins against God. Atonement is made; *i. e.*, he is brought into perfect obedience to, and harmony with, his physical and social nature; and, of course, with the nature of God. This is all that I learn, from nature or Christianity, about atonement; and this I do learn from both. God is love, and never changes; and, of course, needs no reconciliation on his part. Man becomes opposed to love and to God, and needs atonement; *i. e.*, to be reconciled or brought back into harmony with love and with God. He can never be saved without such an atonement or reconciliation; he never can be lost while in this state of perfect harmony with love.

Dost thou ask, "How is this atonement, or reconciliation, to be effected?" There is but one agent or power that can ever bring it about, and heal the wounds inflicted by man on his physical or social nature. Man's only recuperative power or redeemer, to body or soul, is within him; placed there, by the wise and good Author of our being, as an ever-present, ever-vigilant and ever-potent savior. I break a leaf from yon sweet geranium or polyanthus, and injure it: where is the power to heal the wound? I strike an ax into yon mighty sycamore: where is the redeemer—the healing power? None will hesitate to say, in the flower or tree itself. The vital principle in the sycamore or geranium must save it, or it cannot be saved. No outward application can heal it.

I cut, burn or bruise my flesh, injure my lungs or take poison into my stomach. Where is my redeemer? Instant relief must be had. There is no time to go to an outward remedy, nor is there need. The vital principle of physical life must do the work. I know not what that agent or power is; perhaps it will be known when man's attention is turned in earnest to discover it. I only know it is there, on the watch-tower of the system, and instantly flies to the rescue of the wounded part, and to expel the enemy. So far, all are agreed. None think of going for a savior out of the thing to be saved, in regard to all injuries done to the body. True, external applications are used, but they often hinder, rather than help, the vital principle in performing the cure, and are designed only to help nature perform it.

Thus man's inferior nature is most wisely and kindly provided with an internal, omnipresent, all-sufficient redeemer. How is it with his higher or social nature, his *soul*? Has God made the recovery of this to depend on some outward agent, power or sacrifice? What is the fact? Simply that the Author of our being works by a uniform rule, and has fixed in our souls a recuperative power, as he has in our bodies, and in trees and flowers. Violate a fixed law of thy soul, and thus wound it, and the vital principle of thy social nature instantly comes with its healing power. Violate the law of love by hatred, or the law of forgiveness by revenge, and instantly the principle of thy social life comes to expel the enemy and heal the wound. Thou art made to feel how bitter it is to hate, and how sweet it is to love; how exhausting, how wretched is revenge, and how delicious, how invigorating is forgiveness. Thy reason, thy conscience, thy sense of justice, and all the powers and energies of thy soul, are at once brought into activity against wrath and revenge, and for love and forgiveness. And thy own nature instantly points thee to the only course which leads to salvation; *i. e.*, reconciliation with those against whom thy wrath and revenge have been directed. And the moment thou art reconciled to them, thou art brought into sweet harmony with thyself and thy God.

If the drunkard stops drinking, repents and makes restitution, he is saved in the only sense in which he can be, from that sin. He ceases to repeat the wounds on his physical and social nature, and now the savior within him rallies to purify and restore the system, and recover it from its deep wounds. It may take years to effect the cure, but nature will work mightily and unremittingly to save her charge, the moment obstacles are removed.

So of slavery, war, and all outrages upon our social and spiritual nature. Cease to do the evil, and the recuperative power of the



soul will rally to perform the cure; and this will be a redeemer strong to save; and the only assistance the sinner can give to this saving power, is to "learn to do well." Love is the only medicine that can help nature to heal the wounds inflicted by hatred; forgiveness the only stimulant that can help nature to recover the soul from the effects of revenge; justice and truth the only helps to nature, in her efforts to save from injustice and falsehood. Ages may roll away before this internal savior—this healing power of the soul—can recover it from the effects of the complicated and giant wrongs which we, by evil doing, have done to our moral nature; but, aided by the practice of goodness, it will triumph in the end, and restore the lost and desecrated soul to itself and its God.

This is the balm, the only balm, that can heal the diseases of man's moral nature—the vital principle placed in it by the Author of our being. It was put there to be a redeemer, to save us from the wounds given to our social and moral nature by our transgressions; and we can do nothing to assist the recuperative process, except to "cease to do evil and learn to do well;" to substitute, in our hearts and lives, love for hatred, forgiveness for revenge, justice for injustice, truth for falsehood, kindness for cruelty, honesty for dishonesty, purity for impurity, good for evil. Having done, and continuing to do this, no power in the universe can prevent our complete restoration, in this or some other state, to perfection and happiness. Without this assistance, on our part, no power can save us.

The dogmas of the popular systems of theology have been to this recuperative power in our social and moral nature, what the drugs of the apothecary have been to the vital principle of our bodies—they have only weakened its power, and retarded man's redemption. The doctrines of the infallibility of the bible; of arbitrary revelation; of special divine interposition to save the good, or to punish the wicked by arbitrary penalties; of death as a necessity to be submitted to rather than, as a violation of natural law, to be resisted; of total depravity; of the divine origin and authority of governments of violence and blood, and of war and the gallows; of polygamy and concubinage—have been to man's moral and social nature, what calomel, arsenic, nux vomica, deadly nightshade, morphine and opium are to our physical nature. It is more difficult for the soul to cast out the theological poisons, than it is to throw off the diseases which they were administered to cure.

Certain it is, that those who have looked most confidently to an outward savior to save them, have been among the most

merciless marauders upon humanity. They are taught that their destiny has no connection with their feelings and actions toward their fellow men; and they habitually outrage natural justice and equity and trust for salvation to what somebody else has done for them. This they would not do, if they were made to feel that their only redeemer is in them; and that ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, is the imperative condition on which this power can effect their cure.

Is it a fact that God works out all his purposes, respecting us, by fixed laws? If so, the above position is true: the only savior of the soul is in the vital principle of our social and moral nature. That this is a fact, in reference to our souls, is as plain as the fact of a redeeming power in our bodies. Besides, to suppose that God brings us into existence and then makes our destiny, in the eternal future, depend on something out of ourselves—on our getting somebody else to do something for us—seems to me to be the climax of injustice.

Dost thou ask, "If this be so, what was the mission of Christ?" Simply and solely to persuade men to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well;" to feel and act toward one another according to the fixed laws of their social and moral nature. Man is at war with his own nature, and of course at war with his fellow beings, and his God. Christ came to make atonement for them; *i. e.*, to reconcile man to himself, to his brother and his God.

From the beginning to the end of the teachings of Christ and his apostles, man's salvation is made to turn *solely* on his ceasing to do evil and learning to do well; on his restoration to the *love nature*, on his dwelling in love. Christ's sole mission was to restore man to perfect love. And how beautifully his teachings and life accord with this object of his mission. The cry to men is, love one another— *dwell in love* ; then you will dwell in God and God in you. This is heaven. No matter where such a soul is—wherever he goes, heaven goes with him.

**HUMAN GOVERNMENT.**—What is it? A government in which the will of man is the law, and death the penalty.

Dost thou ask, what I think of human governments? If it be true, that God works out his purposes solely by fixed laws, and that man cannot be justly held amenable to any arbitrary laws and penalties, then all human governments must be wrong, for they cannot be other than governments of arbitrary law and penalty. How can man have the right to dictate law to his equal brother, and kill him if he disobeys? for all human government must fall back on death for execution. Death is personified in every legislature, judge and ruler; the government is but an embodiment of

death. No man can be under obligation to do any thing because human governments tell him to do it. If they require what is right, we are to do it; not because they require it, but because it is right, and not because congress or parliament commands it.

But thy query is, "Does not the bible sanction human government?" My answer is, if the bible says our Creator ever authorized human beings to dictate laws to their fellows and to punish those who disobey, the bible is mistaken. A benevolent and all-wise God never placed men under the dominion of men. Nature acknowledges allegiance only to the Creator. To say that God makes man his vicegerent in the government of this world, and arms him with governing power over his brother, is to say that he intended man's earthly existence to be a scene of hatred, contention, violence and blood. To say that he instituted human governments, and armed them with death as the executive power—is to charge on him the folly of setting up an institution to protect life, and basing its existence on the right to kill men; that he protects liberty by enslaving men, truth by lying, purity by impurity, and justice by injustice. Death the guardian of life! Slavery the guardian of liberty, falsehood of truth, war of peace, violence of love; the author of all evil, the protector of the Author of all good! The Author of man and of this universe never committed that folly. The history of all human governments demonstrates, that he who could do this knew not what he was about. As well say, that the only way to make men love us is to hate them, as to say that governments of violence ever did or ever can protect life. They exist by death, and they make the earth a charnel house. I cannot and will not love and worship any being as God, that ever did or can approve of their existence.

Dost thou ask, "What can we do without the protection of governments of human will and death?" Better ask, what has the human race done with them? Just what might have been expected they would do. Such governments have made criminals and killed them. That is all. Nature says, man was made to be governed, not to govern. Whatever says man was made to govern, says what cannot be true, because it is opposed to nature. The history of all attempts of man to rule over man, to dictate to him a rule of life, and to punish him if he disobeys, demonstrates that an assumption of such power is opposed to nature and to nature's God. They have made earth a scene of blood and carnage.

H. C. W.

## LETTER XI.

PENMAEN, *Ohio, January 27, 1850.*

DEAR L.—This is a bright sunny day, and my spirit is as sunny as it. I am just in from a ramble in the woods, with the sweet, joyous young spirits of this family. It has refreshed me greatly, to mingle my sympathies with those of these merry little ones. I have also just read an account of the childhood of one of those loving and strong spirits that were sent into the world to bless and save it. My spirit has been absorbed in that child, the past hour. I could scarcely feel that I had any existence apart from it. Its spirit entered into me entirely. The account was written when the period of childhood had passed away, and deep sorrow had touched the heart of the once loving, happy child. It says: “My recollections of myself (as a child) are dim and confused. One fact, however, stands out in strong relief upon the shadowy mass: *love was the life and essence of my soul.* This is almost the only feature I recognize in its structure at that time, as if there might have been an angel appointed to lead me into the world, to linger with me, until time, by the development of my faculties, should enable me to find my place in it. Indeed I sometimes seem to myself to have been only an embodied sentiment, just a speck from the great fountain of love, with a little matter thrown around it and sent into the world to find something to absorb it. This is no exaggeration. Before this sentient portion of my internal life could have seized upon outward things at all, it selected, with unerring fidelity, those things which corresponded to this love nature, in several instances, and whatever was opposed to it gave me pain.”

Is not this the nature which God designed that all should possess? What would be this world if all children were born and reared in it? How can human beings become what they were designed to be, till children are thus born and reared? Is it not the design of Him who gave us being, that we should all impart to one another the warmth and power of all-trusting love? That each should find in this world an object that shall absorb the deepest affection and devotion of his soul? How loving and gentle God designed we should be! What are we? How much have religious and social institutions contributed to make us what we are, by perverting the purest element of our nature!

But I wish to give in this, some extracts from my journal, on the continent of Europe. They principally relate to institutions that bear on man to crush and destroy him:

“*OLMUTZ, Austria, July 4th, 1844.*”

“I am on the steps of a strongly built old church. The day is just dawning. I came here to be present at early mass. The door is not yet open, but the bell is now tolling, to remind the people the time is near which is appointed to worship God. They are yet in bed, judging from the desolate streets of the city. There, the door is now open and I can look into the gloomy building. On my left, as I face the worm-eaten door, are barracks for soldiers, the gate of which this moment opens, and out comes a company which march along close to me. They go to relieve guard. So the church and the army are close together, each to help the other with its appropriate weapons—the church with prayers, the army with swords and guns.

“A man has just come out of the church of whom I ask: ‘What church is this?’ ‘St. Maurice’s church,’ said he. ‘St. Maurice!’ said I.

'I am not acquainted with that saint. Where did he live? Where did he die? Why did they make a saint of him?' He stared and went on. Some swallows are chirping and twittering to one another, and to the bright morning, on the top of the church, and I think their music is more acceptable to nature's God than that which is chanted by priests within. All around the wall inside are niches, in which are images of Christ, and saints, before which candles are burning.

"I am in the church, and all around me are men and women kneeling before the images of saints, praying; then they rise up, bow and courtsey to the altar where the priest is, and to the saints. Pictures of God the Father, of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, are all around—all of them in the shape of human beings. How can they tell what shape to give to God? But the mind naturally gives to him the form of a man.

"This is a grand old building: but what possible connection can it have with the worship of the true God? None at all; it is a den of superstition on the part of the people, and of hypocrisy and ambition on the part of the priests. The bell tolls, and the priest cries aloud, and the people chime in, all muttering prayers and songs to what they call God. But I have more and more aversion to this system of worship. This cathedral is full of paintings. In these I should feel more interest but for the sight of these men and women, bowing and kneeling before them and saying prayers to them. To worship God in pictures! A people who hesitate not to tear human bodies to pieces, come here to honor God by bowing, kneeling and praying, to pictures and to images of saints. But what is the difference between bowing and praying to God in these pictures and images and to God in the abstract?

"*In the Market.*—People coming in along every avenue that leads to the country; the women, bearing whatever they have to sell on their heads. They all step into the cathedral, cross themselves with holy water, hastily mutter a prayer to Mary or to some saint, and then come to the market, prepared to sell to any buyer, and for as much as they can get.

"I am standing by a huge monument, dedicated to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A rude image designed to represent each, is on it. What a delusion! To think to embody their God and worship him in a stone carving! Men see God in every thing but man."

"WAGRAM, July 5th.

"Came from Olmutz to this place, on my way to Vienna. Here was fought one of Napoleon's bloodiest battles with the Austrians, headed by the Arch Duke Charles. Austerlitz is not far off, where was fought the battle, to which Napoleon alluded so often as 'the sun of Austerlitz.' At this battle he took 20,000 prisoners, and Vienna and all Austria lay at the feet of the conqueror. It was fought Dec. 2, 1805. In this battle 22,000 Russians attempted to cross a lake near the town, that was frozen over, and escape. Napoleon turned all his artillery against the ice, broke it up, and drowned them all. Not one escaped! This was counted a master stroke of military tactics, and they gave God thanks! All this region, for miles around, was covered with dead and dying men. Yet war is divine! So they say."

"VIENNA, July 6th.

"I am in St. Stephen's Church, the great Cathedral of Vienna, and the boast of Austria. I am near the altar, where the priest is saying mass in Latin, bowing, muttering, decked in costly robes, and close behind him is a boy, in a white robe, with a bell, and every now and then he catches hold of the priest's robe and holds it up to keep it from dragging in the dust. In the aisles and slips and open space, are people kneeling

and muttering prayers aloud and to themselves. When the boy tinkles the bell they bow, then again when it tinkles they start to their feet and cross themselves. The bell tells them when to kneel and when to rise; when to cross themselves, when to pray and when to keep quiet; when to look sober, and when cheerful; when to be merry, and when sad. There is as much sense in this as in Protestant worship—for this is regulated by the clock and calendar, and the sound of bell.

“Four candles are burning on the main altar—that is made of silver. Over the altar is a monstrous figure representing God, on each side of which is a guard of soldiers with spears, to show on what he depends to sustain his power and worship on earth. The soldiers look terribly fierce and grim, but not more so than does the image of the being for whose defense they are placed. Indeed, what war-making Christendom calls God, is grim and savage. Nothing but swords, spears and guns, can sustain his dominion on earth. All around the church are bronze images of saints, of Mary and of Christ, pictures of all kinds, and crosses with Christ nailed to them. Here and there, are confessional boxes, into which priests enter, and shut themselves in so none can see them, but whence they can see all that is without. The penitent kneels outside the box, and puts the mouth to a little hole and there confesses into the priest’s ear, which is applied to the hole inside.

“I am writing on a kind of railing near the stone pulpit in which John Capistran preached a crusade against the Turks, in 1451. Twenty millions of human beings were slaughtered by professed Christians, for what? Merely to rescue a city from the hands of those whom they called infidels. They worshiped God in a holy city, or sepulcher, and shot him, in twenty millions of his children. The same spirit now animates the priests and churches of America. They venerate God in a book, a meeting house and a sabbath, and sell him at auction, and hunt him with dogs in three millions of his children! They love and worship a shadow, and dishonor and despise the substance!

“I am by the effigy of Frederick XI, emperor of Austria. In his hand is a scroll, with this on it, *Austria est imperare orbis universi*. (Austria is destined to rule the world.) Oh! the ridiculous vaporings of kings and patriots! “Rule the world,” will she? She will be mistaken. Wait a little longer.

“St. Stephens is counted the noblest specimen of Gothic architecture in the world. It is 350 feet long, and 220 in breadth, and was completed in 1480; one part of it was built 1147. The tower is 465 feet high, the highest in the world, except that of the Strasburgh Cathedral, which is 15 feet higher. When any of the imperial family dies, the bowels are buried in St. Stephens, the heart in the church of the Augustines, and the body in the Capuchin church.

“The history of this den of superstition and crime, extends far into the past. Many generations have worshiped God as he is embodied in this consecrated temple, and in the observances that are enacted in it. But how can infinite wisdom be pleased with such a display? What possible use can this be to God? What does he care for the prayers that are muttered here? All the sacred and hallowed feelings and thoughts of the people, twine around this cathedral. This, the priests say, is God’s house, and that he dwells in it, and that the people must come here to see him. God’s house! It is full of murder. All around it and under it, are pictures and images of the worst criminals. Is this God’s house? Does God dwell in loving fellowship with those decorated priests, and these grim old warriors? If so, I have no wish to dwell with him. The being who

made me and placed in me a law of love, has forever disqualified me to love and adore any being as God, who can delight in such scenes of violence.

"I have been through many streets and squares in this beautiful city. Saw one monument in a public square on which was this "*Deo, Patri, Creatori*" (to God, the Father, the Creator). Why not erect monuments to God, the Father and Creator? What is Trinity church, New York; what are St. Pauls Cathedral, and York Minster; what are all consecrated cathedrals and temples, but monuments to God, the Father and Creator? And religionists of every name, age and nation, expend their energies in building these monuments of brick and stone to God, in heaven, and leave their fellow men to perish without food or raiment, without a house or a home! How many billions of money do Christians spend in showing their love and devotion to their abstract divinity, the phantom of their own darkened minds! *Nearly* as many as they spend in slaughtering men, women and children! Oh, the folly of what men call worship! It is devotion to a chimera. They sell God in man to get means to worship God in heaven! They glorify their Father, which is in heaven, by enslaving and hanging his children on earth."

5 o'clock, P. M.

"I am at the dinner table in one of the principal hotels. About thirty men and women at the table—apparently of the first ranks, as certain classes are called in society—most of them people of Vienna—some travelers. On my right is an Englishman, on my left an Austrian, and next to him an Englishman, who has just come up the Danub from Constantinople, through the Black sea, by steam all the way—some ten or twelve hundred miles—2) days coming up, the current so strong against them. There are Italians, Frenchmen, Prussians, Swiss, Russians, Austrians, and English at the table—many with long beards, and nearly all with mustaches, curiously and nicely cut and greased and painted. Dinner has been served up in ten different dishes. Nothing set on the table to be carved. All carved in another room, or at a side table, and handed round by waiters on plates to each guest—one waiter bearing a plate of carved meat and the gravy, and another a plate of vegetables, and each takes from the plate as he pleases, and eats, and before he has scarce cleared his plate, comes a waiter and whips it away, and leaves a clean one. Thus each dish is served, and the plate whipped away and changed at each dish. This is the way dinners are served in all the German hotels.

"Now the fruits and nuts are on the table, and each is helping himself. A few have left the table. We commenced at 4 o'clock. We have been at it nearly an hour and an half. I have tasted a little of every dish, to learn what it was like; and some of the dishes were compounds highly offensive to more senses than one, yet greatly liked by many. Not less than two-thirds of the guests, now at table, are smoking their cigars. The room is full of smoke, and that, combined with the smell of the dinner in a hot room with confined air, as it is here, is but just endurable. I would go, but I want to see the end. But I find that a knowledge of men and things to be gained at a German '*table d'hôte*,' as the dinner is called, must be gained by sufferings little less than martyrdom. The men are eating fruit and nuts, and sucking in and puffing out again great columns and clouds of tobacco smoke, at intervals of eating. After the simple, coarse, and healthful diet of Graefenberg, for the last six months, I should not wonder if, by some suffering, I had to pay the penalty of this indulgence, or rather this *eating to get wisdom*—for to taste of many of the dishes has been any thing but an indulgence. I wonder not that people have

gout, apoplexy, paralysis, and that they become stupid, brutish, idiotic. How can it be otherwise, when they load their stomachs with such loathsome compounds? and pour down with it and upon it such vast quantities of wine and brandy? But two or three guests at this dinner table but had their wine bottles, women and men. Then, to crown all, comes tobacco smoke, the climax of glory. But in this glory the women could have no share. Heaven made them *women*—therefore they have no right to smoke tobacco—no more right than they have to speak in public! I think it would be as great an insult and outrage upon the superior dignity and glory of the masculine gender in Germany for the women to smoke, as it would to the lordly Brahmin for a woman to sit down at his table and eat a bit of rice with him; or as it would be to the ordained priest for a woman to go into his pulpit, and face an audience in America, and tell them about the wrongs of the imbruted slave. The German would roll up his eyes in horror, and say—‘Let the woman keep—from smoking tobacco—we want that work all to ourselves; it is our prerogative, as *men*, to smoke tobacco—let the women keep in their appropriate sphere—let the women be in subjection.’ So the priests in America say—‘Let the *women* keep silence—it is our prerogative, as *men*, to speak for the slave—*silence* is women’s appropriate sphere; and better the slave should perish in his chains, than that woman should procure his freedom by coming into our pulpits, and invading our divine prerogative. We want the pulpits, with all their honors and emoluments, to ourselves.’ So the slave must ever remain a slave, for the priests will never speak in earnest for his redemption.

“I would be sorry to see the women smoke, but I do not like to see them kept from smoking because they are women. Yet this is as good a reason why they should not smoke, as it is why they should not preach.”

The following relates to a convent, on the banks of the Danube, above Vienna. On what are all monasteries and convents based? Simply on the idea that we owe duties to God apart from those we owe to man, and that we are to love and worship him in the abstract. What do these monks and nuns fix their thoughts upon when, in their cloisters and cells, they try to think of God aside from man? On an image in their minds, as do all who thus attempt to love and worship him.

Protestants and catholics have the same views of communion with God. To close our eyes and hearts on all that pertains to our existence here, and go out into an ideal world, and there hold converse with the Divinity, aside from man and his relations, is accounted the highest act of piety. For this purpose, men and women go into convents and monasteries, the more easily and effectually to withdraw their affections and sympathies from man, and fix them on God. Protestants seek to crush their human affections and sympathies, in order to get up a love for God. Why try to think of God, or to love and adore him, aside from man? We should not. We should love and worship God in man, and then would they bring forth fruit to bless the down-trodden and needy.

“5, P. M., July 6.

“We have been ascending the Danube several hours against a strong current. We are now passing a Benedictine convent, some twenty miles above Vienna—a mighty monument of the piety of antiquity, erected on a hill 700 feet high, 4 miles back from the Danube, but seeming close to us. It was founded in 1072. It is a beautiful spot. We are now leaving the flat banks and country, and entering a wild, mountainous region. The convent stands on the first summit that we have seen since we left Vienna. We have just had a talk about this system of worship that leads



men and women into convents and monasteries. Of what account are these abstract meditations on the Deity, when they lead to no beneficial results to mankind? A system of religion that divorces God from man—that professes to honor God while it dishonors and imbrutes man—that merely presents a deity to man to be wondered and gazed at—that *performs* a divinity for the amusement of men—can be of no use. But this monastic system only carries out what is urged upon us by a one-day-in-seven religion. This makes it a duty to withdraw the mind from all earth's concerns, and meditate on God, one day in seven; these monks and nuns go into these retirements, that they may meditate on him all the time. The monks and nuns are most consistent; for, if it be injurious and sinful to meditate on this world's concerns at all, then why not retire from it altogether?"

See, in the following, what professed Christians have done under the sanctions of their bible and their God. See what tortures they inflicted on men, to vindicate the sanctity of the bible or a mass. The same is done now in this nation, only in a different way. Man is desecrated to maintain the sanctity of a day, a book or an institution. Engines are at Sa'zburgh, erected there by a professedly Christian bishop, to torture those who dared to differ, in any respect, from the popular construction and views of the bible. One is in the shape of a woman, with outstretched arms, made of iron. The victim was lowered through a trap door, into the arms of the image, and a machinery was put in motion which encircled those iron arms around him, and literally crushed him to death. This was called the "Virgin's embrace."

It should be kept in mind, that all these tortures were inflicted under the sanction of the bible. The bible is to every man and woman, to every sect, and to every age and nation, just what each conceives it to be. The Catholics and Protestants, till recently, believed the bible authorized and commanded the killing of men for religious opinion. But humanity triumphed over the bible—it gained a victory in favor of justice, kindness and right; against the bible, in favor of injustice, wrong and cruelty; for, as the bible was received, it did then favor these shocking cruelties. So, the bible, as it is now received by universal Christendom, sanctions war and every conceivable wrong that man can do to man. Humanity, in favor of non-resistance, anti-slavery, love, justice and forgiveness, is slowly, but surely, gaining a victory over the bible, in favor of war, the gallows and slavery. Then, as in former times, in reference to burning heretics, will the bible, as it will be construed by the priests and church, come around and declare that it always was opposed to these crimes. So, as men change, the bible changes. I state a fact, which none will deny who is acquainted with the history of that book. What it sanctions in one age, it condemns in another; what it declared to be a duty in Moses and Joshua, it denounces as a crime of blackest die in us.

"LINZ, Austria, July 8.

"I have a great desire to visit Ratisbon; but it is out of my route, and would take several days. I have heard much of that town, which now is said to contain 23,000 inhabitants. It was founded by the Romans, and called Regium. The boatmen of Ratisbon once gained great renown for piety, because they conveyed down the river those murdering hordes, who, in the name of Christianity, went, as crusaders, to butcher the infidels and rescue Jerusalem from their grasp. The history of Ratisbon records ten sieges which it has endured—professed Christian against professed Christian—accompanied by heavy bombardments and exactions of money. In 1800 Napoleon took it by storm, and destroyed the suburbs

and nearly two hundred houses. The history of Ratisbon is the history of every *fortified* town in Europe—a history of sieges, bombardments, storms, pillage, blood and rapine. I wonder men will not be instructed by the experience of towns, cities and nations. To be armed is to provoke attack; and whatever is attacked, may be destroyed. If men would be safe, they must be defenseless. I will here transcribe an account of the *dungeons* and *chamber of torture*—under the town hall—(Rathhaus) of Ratisbon, as it is given by one who visited them not long since. The account lies before me, and is replete with horror. The Diet, or Parliament, of the Austrian empire, met here from 1663 till 1805. These dungeons and instruments of torture were for the use of the “powers that be,” who are said to derive their power to perpetrate these atrocities from God. See what men, professing to be praying, pious Christians, can do. The traveler says:

“The damsel who acted as my guide, was about to lead me through a long suit of rooms; but I begged her to let me see the prisons. She procured a lantern and some sheets of paper, and led the way to the vaults of the Rathhaus. After several turnings, we came to a door-way, so low, that I was obliged to bend nearly double to enter it; and on passing it, I found myself, with my back still bent, in a low, vaulted dungeon, six or eight feet square, lined with wood, having a raised step at one end to serve as a pillow to the inmate of this miserable cell. Day light was entirely denied to him; and the only air that could reach him, from the dark passage without, came through a small grating in the door. On the outside of this chamber, my guide stooped down at the trap-door of iron grating, strongly fastened with bolts and chains, and lighting one of the pieces of paper, pushed it through the bars. As it fell, I perceived, by its light, a dungeon more horrid than the first—a kind of well, twelve feet deep, with no other entrance than this trap-door, so that the prisoner must have been let down into it as into a living tomb. Of the former kind of cells, there are nineteen or twenty; of the latter, three or four. They are, happily, no longer used. We passed hence, through several strong iron doors, to the *torture chamber*, a lofty apartment, with ample space for the exercise of the apparatus of cruelty deposited in it, which, to my surprise, I find existing here in nearly a perfect state.

“First: There is a horizontal rack, resembling a long bedstead, or platform of boards, upon which the criminal was laid, his feet attached to one end, and his arms fastened to a rope which passed round a windlass at the other, so as to stretch out his limbs to the utmost that agony would allow without causing death. It exhibits refinement in cruelty, being furnished with a roller armed with spikes, over which the body of the sufferer was drawn backward and forward.

“The *second* species of torture resembled the first, but was inflicted vertically instead of horizontally, by raising the victim by a rope attached to his arms, which were bound behind his back, to the roof, and then letting him fall, by loosening the rope, to within a few inches of the ground. Two stones, so heavy that I could scarcely lift them, were previously attached to his feet, so that the jerk inflicted by the sudden fall must have strained every joint out of its socket. This instrument consists of an upright frame of wood, with a windlass about two feet from the ground, to which the rope is still fastened at one end, while the other dangles from a pulley in the roof, with a triangle of wood attached to it. To this the arms of the victim were attached.

“The *third* instrument was a very high armed chair, having, instead of a cushion, a seat stuck full of sharp spikes of wood, about two inches high,

upon which the prisoner was obliged to sit with weights on his lap, and others hanging from his feet,

“A ladder, leaning against the wall, has some of the rounds replaced by angular pieces of wood, sharpened like prisms, turning on their axis. The criminal was hauled by a rope over a pulley, passing into the next room, to the top of the ladder, and then allowed to descend; the rapid friction up and down grazing every vertebræ in his naked back, as he passed over the prism.

“There is, also, a wooden horse, on the sharp edge of which the criminal was made to ride, and two or three other instruments, equally horrible, the invention of which is a disgrace to human nature. One side of this chamber is partitioned off by a screen of wooden lattice-work; and behind it may still be seen the desk at which the judges sat, seeing and hearing all that passed, but unseen themselves, and took down the confessions extorted from the victims in the moment of agony, as well as the seats of the executioner and surgeon. I felt a thrill of horror, in beholding this abominable machinery, which, I think, surpasses in iniquity the far-famed dungeons of Vienna; and is, I believe, the only example in Europe of such an apparatus perfectly preserved. It deserves to be preserved, to show that, at least, in judicial proceedings, the world has improved. The *torture chamber* lies directly under the hall of the Diet; and, had not the floor been well lined, the cries of the sufferers must have reached the ears of the assembly. The lining is now removed, so that the light actually appears through cracks in the ceiling above.”

“I have copied this account to illustrate the nature of that fearful power over human life, which the advocates of the gallows and the battle-field concede to government. For, if governments are, as the opponents of non-resistance say they are, empowered by God to take life, as a penalty or in defense, they are authorized to inflict any punishment short of death. We shudder to see men perpetrating such savage cruelties in the name of the God of love. Even the advocates of the hangman and the soldier would be shocked at such cruelties. But they are the natural result of the bloody principle for which they plead. I cannot respect that philanthropy which shudders to see an arm or a leg broken, as a penalty for crime, but which gives God thanks to see a man's neck broken on the gallows, or the bodies of thousands torn to atoms in battle. No engine was ever invented by man, more cruel, savage, bloody and murderous to mankind, than the cannon ball and the bomb-shell. No dungeons of Venice, nor the torture chamber of Ratisbon, ever contained more barbarous implements. Yet the opponents of non-resistance insist that the gallows, the cannon ball and the bomb shell, are God-ordained and Christian weapons of defense and punishment.”

II. C. W.

## LETTER XII.

PENMAEN, *Ohio*, January 28, 1850.

*Dear L.*—I have just held a conversation with one who insists that slavery, aggressive, exterminating war—that concubinage, polygamy, robbery, murder and assassination are in perfect harmony with the nature of a God of justice and love. He says that God may make a deed just to day, and unjust to-morrow; may convert right into wrong, and wrong into right—truth into falsehood, and falsehood into truth, by a mere arbitrary command; and that this is the way in which he governs men. Such is the ground which every one must take who holds to the infallibility of the bible. How can the social wrongs of this world ever be cured, when every conceivable outrage upon man is sanctioned by what men recognize as their only infallible rule of faith and practice? He, as most others do, scouts the idea that parents are to be responsible for the existence and inherited mental and bodily diseases of their children. He denies that men are to be held responsible for their voluntary acts. Such are the popular ideas of God, and of his manner of governing men, that they must take this ground, and must justify and father upon him, every crime, or give up a fundamental article of their religious faith, i. e., *arbitrary revelation*. Christendom, as well as Heathendom, is accustomed to see God in any and every thing except man; in him, nothing is seen but total depravity, and this they are not disposed to remove.

But I will continue the extracts from my journal in Innsbruck, over the Arlberg in Constance, Geneva, Basle, &c. For most part, they show how men are disposed to love and adore God in any and every thing, rather than in man.

“INNSBRUCK (*Tyrol*), July 12, 1844.

“I am in the market. The morn is bright and sunny. The market is full of the peasantry from all the country round, with a great supply of meat, of wild and domestic animals, and of fruits and berries of all kinds. The most abundant item of fruit is the nectarine; it is cheap—three and four to be had for a cent, in value. Every thing is cheap. No need of any one going hungry or cold here. There is no market-house—the buying and selling all done in the open air, on benches and tables placed on the sidewalks, and around and in a large square. The appearance of the people impresses me very favorably, as to their social and domestic habits. People who appear so neat and tidy in the market, especially the *sellers*, must have comfortable and happy homes. Their dress, especially that of the women, is most singular. Instead of handkerchiefs tied fantastically about their heads, in the fashion of the women of Salzburgh and Linz, or a cap, as is the fashion of Scotland and Ireland, the women here uniformly wear *hats*, like the men, or caps made of wool or cotton, dyed blue, and running up to a peak. The people from the country, with fruit and vegetables, are mostly women, and many of them with one or two young children as helpers. Here and there are Italians, with their wares, and several Jews have stands, where they are busy displaying their finery. Judging from their appearance in the market, I should think the Tyrolese a much more lively, witty, laughing people, than those of Austria proper and Prussia—more sprightly and active in their movements and habits—more shrewd. This is a market day on which an unusual gathering is seen in the town. The main street is filled with men, women and children, all seeming eager to sell or to buy. There is much of a disposition,

evidently, to make good bargains—to buy cheap and sell dear—the business maxim of the whole world. I have just purchased a dozen nectarines, and had a very pleasant time in buying them. There is no place like a market to see the character of a people. I have now spent two hours, looking at every thing and every body, and leave the busy scene with regret.

“Now I am in the *Silver Chapel* of the court church—so called from an altar, and an image of the Virgin on it, both of solid silver—built by Ferdinand, of Austria, as a mausoleum for himself and his wife, Philipina Welser. Now by the grave of *Hofer*, whose body was brought here, from Mantua, in 1823, where he was shot in 1810 by Napoleon. There is a statue of him, by a Tyrolese artist, representing him in his native costume, with a rifle slung over his shoulders, and an unfurled banner in his hand. The history of *Hofer*, the leader of the Tyrolese in the war against Napoleon and the Bavarians, is of deep interest. He was an innkeeper in a small village. He dealt in flax and in cattle. He had gained a reputation by his ready eloquence—by his strong attachment to his country—by his honesty and *piety*. When placed at the head of the government, he neither changed his peasant dress nor his expenses. During the six weeks he was at the head of the government, he cost the country only 500 florins. When Napoleon took possession of the Tyrol, *Hofer* concealed himself in a little hut on the mountains. Here he was fed and guarded by a few friends. But a large price was set upon his head by Napoleon, and a Tyrolese betrayed him to his murderer, who conducted him in chains to Mantua, and there shot him, Feb. 10, 1810. Since his death, the inn has been kept by his widow and family, who have many relics of him, which are held in great esteem by the peasantry. All the principal leaders in that war—long and most bloody—were from the peasants. Indeed, there are but few nobles in the Tyrol—none capable of leading them in a wild, mountain warfare. The Tyrolese are capable of deeds of desperate daring as *individuals*, but are totally unaccustomed to move and act in masses. So I should judge from their history. In this church is a monument to all those who fell in defense of *Fatherland*. Thus the church, like Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s in London, instructs the people in deeds of murder. One may get a tolerably correct idea of the history of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in this church, so far as men and things are concerned; for it seems to be the great object of the church to throw around those men and deeds of violence, the sanctions of Christianity. It is most melancholy to stand amid this church, and see the characters of those who have controlled the destinies of Europe for the last 400 years. They have been distinguished only for their vices and villany. These national, public criminals must, ere long, be brought to the same test to which the private individual is brought. My regard for what are called holy times, places and callings, is all gone. This gloomy old building really seems to me, with all its decorations of pulpits, altars, organs and pictures, like a den of thieves. I know holy *men* and *women*, but I know no holy days, pulpits or houses. All days are the Lord’s days—all places the Lord’s places. In this church, Christiana, Queen of Sweden, was received into the Catholic church in 1655—on which occasion there was a great gathering of priests and people, and great shoutings and rejoicings.

“Now in the museum. In one apartment are several relics of *Hofer*, some of which he had on when he was shot by Napoleon. His sword, hat and braces are here, and a medal which he always wore around his neck; and also the original copy of the last letter which he wrote. I drew and examined his sword, so often gory with human blood, with mel-

ancholy interest. The people here look on Hofer as Americans do upon Washington, only with a livelier and deeper interest. He died a martyr to their freedom; but, like Washington, he was a man of blood. The voice of a brother's blood cries to God against them both. That they butchered men for their country's good cannot excuse them. Their guilt is, *they slaughtered MEN*—they offered HUMAN sacrifices on the altar of human institutions. They valued institutions above men.

The keeper of the museum is now unfolding and displaying, in great wonder, a copy of one of the immense newspapers published in the United States—the *Brother Jonathan*. It is a wonder, compared with the little, contemptible things called newspapers, published on the continent. This gigantic sheet is kept, carefully folded and locked up in a box of wood, and exhibited as one of the great curiosities of the museum. The paper was presented to the museum by an Austrian, who bought it in New York on purpose to bring it over as a show. It will be long before the press in France, Spain, Austria, Prussia or Russia, will be free to publish such papers. These stern, hoary despotisms decide not only on the *matter*, but the *size* of their newspapers; and they are limited to the smallest possible size. You will scarce find an opinion expressed in the continental papers, touching political men or measures. Infinitely preferable is the unrestricted license of the press in America, with all its attendant abuses, to this state of governmental supervision. The last creature in the world to superintend the press is government. This soulless, irresponsible monster is no more fit to superintend the press, than it is to punish criminals.”

“LANDECK, July 14th, 7 o'clock, P. M.

“Arrived at the Adler (Eagle) Hotel. The first thing that drew our attention as we came up, was a splendid carriage at the door, an Englishman and two women, with their outriders, scolding and storming at the landlady and her beds, her rooms, her accommodations generally, and about the price. The English were bargaining for rooms and beds, and talking to the woman as they talk to their poo, cowering, servile dependants at home, with great insolence and contempt. She was declaring that she had the best that could be had amid these wild mountains, so out of the way, and that her price was as low as could be asked by honest men, and that if they expected better accommodations in this region, they would be mistaken. The man and woman gave her an insolent, abusive reply. She turned, walked into the house, and bid the daughters follow, saying to the gentleman and his insolent female companions, that they might find lodgings where they could—she should not have them in her house, at any rate; at which all the rabble, that had gathered to hear the dispute, shouted their approbation. The poor, discomfited party looked in a sad plight, for there was no other hotel in the place fit to lodge in. But they had to drive off amid the jeers of the people. The English often appear very mean and contemptible as travelers. They think to lord it over people abroad, as they do over their vassals at home; but they find the independent Tyrolese a match for their contemptible folly and insolence. So we just landed, and took possession of the rooms and beds for which the party were bargaining.

“Soon as we had stored our baggage in our rooms and ordered supper, we hastened up a high precipice, directly over the town, to visit the old castle of *Kronburg*, a mighty ruin on the top of a conical rock. Ages gone by, it was a strong hold of some old robber knights who lived by plunder. It is now in ruins. Some rooms we found entire, and some of the dungeons. In one room, we found a poor man, with a wife and two children; the man was lying on a miserable, dirty bed, in a burning fever. We told him

how to apply cold water to get relief. The wife and children were thin, pale, haggard, starving, and in rags. Within a few rods of this family was a church, where some fat, stall-fed priests were muttering prayers for the dead, and the people were kneeling around. We looked in as we came up. There they were solemnly performing their mummeries, and a brother and sister sick and starving before them. They were muttering prayers for the dead and suffering, leaving the living to die for want of food. I am disgusted with this useless mummery. It has nothing to do with the humane, benevolent religion of Jesus. Under the management of ambitious priests, the people are made to feel more respect for times, places and ceremonies, than for God or man. We should be *Christians* without regard to time, or place, or forms. Here were this poor man and wife and two little children, immured in this gloomy old ruin, starving, while the priests and people were carrying on their religion close by. A religion without humanity, like the slaveholding, war-making, tippling religion of Christendom, I loathe and repudiate. It is a curse to man; it is odious to God. Christianity has no sympathy with it.

“FLIRSCH, July 14.

“It is SUNDAY; and about two miles back met multitudes of the people—men, women and children—going to church to hear mass—all in their *Sunday* dress, and in the peculiar costume of this mountain region. All the women had on their heads a cap made of cotton, very thick, dyed blue, and running up very high to a peak. They are very thick and heavy, and give to the women a bold, *grenadier* look. The men and women all had a Sunday look, a Sunday walk, a Sunday appearance and air throughout. But the children walked along by themselves quite easy and natural. How do people get the notion that He, who is a spirit, and seeks those to worship him who worship him in spirit and in truth, wishes to have them speak, look, walk and appear differently on Sunday from what they do on other days? Wherever they get the notion, it is anti-Christian and ruinous. No thought, word or act is made right or wrong by times and seasons. What is sin one day is sin all days; and what is right on Sunday is right on Monday, so far as the day is concerned. A Sunday saint and Monday sinner, or a Sunday Christian and Monday infidel, has no name or place in the kingdom of heaven. From this spot we begin to ascend the steep part of the mountain.

“12½ o'clock. *At the Hospice.*

“On the summit, or in the pass or notch of the Arlberg, 6,000 feet above the water level. We are resting here for a moment in a solitary house or hospice in the pass or notch. Have walked several miles and am weary. Have just been out running, lying and rolling in the deep snow (the 14th of July), and have been well *snow-balled* by my companions. The carriage road over the Arlberg was made first by the emperor Joseph II, but has been greatly improved within the last ten years; still, it is not now always safe, as after heavy rains or sudden thaws, accompanied by thunder, masses of stone and earth often fall down upon it and obstruct the passage.

“This hospice, or shelter in the pass, was rebuilt in 1836 to shelter travelers from the Alpine snows. Its original founder was Henry Findelkind, a poor foundling who, having been adopted by a farmer in the valley below, served him as a cowherd, and followed him on Sundays to church, bearing his sword and military equipments. For these Tyrolese of the Alps used to worship the Prince of Peace, as did the pilgrims of Plymouth and Boston, with sword and gun in hand, to be ready to slaughter their fellow beings. They wanted swords and guns to thrust and shoot their

love and forgiveness into the hearts of their enemies. Henry Findelkind, as he drove his master's cattle up into these wild passes in the spring, used to be deeply affected by the sight of the dead bodies of men who had perished in this the only pass over the Arlberg. The lad often found their eyes torn out of their sockets and eaten by the birds of prey. These bodies he used to inter. At length, as he expresses it, he began, *with the help of St. Christopher* and of God, and with no other pecuniary means than seventeen guilders (\$7 50), the earnings of ten years' service, to devote himself exclusively to the preservation of wayfarers over the Arlberg, and save men's lives with these blessed alms. Henceforth he gave himself entirely to this work, and spent his life and all he could earn in its noble and earnest pursuit. Before his death he saved not less than fifty lives of travelers. He traversed Europe to get help, and enrolled among the brotherhood of the Hospice of St. Christopher (for so it was called) the names of many princes and nobles. It was a glorious, humane, Christian work; and standing or sitting here on the door-step of this snug building, in which in winter provisions and means of fire are always kept, and looking off upon the fearfully wild and desolate mountains *now* covered with snow, one can but feel the emotions of the traveler who is overtaken by wintry storms and tempests in this fearful pass of the Arlberg, to find this comfortable shelter. They must feel grateful to him who first provided this shelter amid this desolation.

\*Near this building (no other building for several miles below) is the boundary line between the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg. The highest point of the road here is marked 6,200 feet above the level of the sea. It is said that the snow accumulates here in the pass, in winter, twenty feet deep, and lies on till the first of July, and then begins to return in great depths before the first of September. The mountains all around here are covered with fir trees of a stunted growth and scared and withered appearance.

“STUBEN, 3 o'clock, P. M.

“This is a small, poor village, at the foot of the Arlberg on the north. There is a little church in it. We stopped here to bait the team, and to get a dinner for ourselves. I sit looking out of the window at a church opposite, to see all the people of the village, and for several miles up and down the valley, assembling and forming a procession. About a dozen priests, all dressed in white robes, and all fat and lusty men, have just come out of the church; before them, a number of little boys, most fantastically decked out, bearing burning tapers. In the midst of the priests is one bearing a large pan or basin on the top of a long pole, in which is the *host*, or consecrated *wafer*. The priests and boys march slowly and solemnly down the road—the men and boys fall into the procession, all marching two and two, forming a long, long procession. They have marched off, down the mountain, to a village lower down. This, I am told, is a procession to carry the *host*, or consecrated wafer, among the people, so that all may have an opportunity to do homage to it, and receive the benefit and saving power of its presence. I believe these priests are villanous deceivers. They can't believe there is any virtue in the presence of that ridiculous bit of colored pastry. They must know that their foolish prayers cannot impart any saving power to that bit of wheaten dough. All this mummery is solely to keep up and strengthen their priestly power. May God open the eyes of the people, to see the pretensions of the priesthood in the light of divine truth. The costume of the people I saw to great advantage. It is Sunday, and the people are all in their best and most fashionable dress. It is totally different from that of the people on



the Tyrol side of the Arlberg, and in the valley of the Inn. The people all look comfortable and happy under their priestly delusions.

"I have just been into the little church. It is full of images and pictures, crosses and saints, altars and confessionals. Candles are burning on the altar, and every thing is decorated to impose upon the senses of the people. But the same feelings govern these papists that influence the people of Old and New England, and of all Christendom, when they enter their places of worship on Sunday. It is the *time*, and *place* and *circumstance*, that affect them; not love and reverence for God in man. They oppress, enslave and butcher human beings, while they enact this mummery. They reverence the meeting-house, the pulpit, the priesthood, the form and ceremony, the day, place and circumstance, and not man. It is not the presence of God or a sense of his governing care that affects them with awe, nor is it love for man, but *time* and *place*.

"CONSTANCE, July 16.

"This is a town on the borders of the lake Constance, formerly one of the leading cities of Europe; now a small, unimportant, but beautifully located town. The Rhine issues from the lake here, to go on its distant journey to the German ocean. At the dawn of day this morn I was in the Minster, an old church or cathedral, built in 1052. I was there some time—saw and heard all I wished, and looked over the history of what occurred there in 1415. This is what I wrote in my journal: '4 o'clock, morning. I am now in the Minster, an old Gothic church. The priests are performing, candles are burning, and a few people are bowing, kneeling, crossing, counting beads, &c. Nothing interesting in the architecture in the inside or outside, except the curiously carved, enormous *door*, made of oak and covered all over with representations of scenes in the life and death of Christ. I am now standing on the spot where John Huss stood when sentence of death was pronounced upon him. On that occasion, the Grand Council of Constance held its sittings in this church, on purpose to hear their president, *Sigismund*, emperor of Austria, pass the sentence on Huss, the 'arch-heretic,' as they called him, to consign his body to the flames, and his soul to hell-fire, as they intended. That council was composed of 30 priests and cardinals, 4 patriarchs, 39 archbishops, 150 bishops, 200 doctors of divinity, and abbots, prelates, friars and ambassadors from all the countries of Christendom without number. It was commenced solely to correct abuses and corruptions in the church. It met in 1414 and sat till 1418, and one of its first acts was to seize, imprison, condemn and burn John Huss for attempting to reform the church, and after having given him a safe conduct to attend the council. Such was the character of that council which met to reform the church! A set of more unprincipled and dissolute men never met in concave, than was this 'Grand, Holy Council of Constance,' as it was called. I am disgusted with myself that I ever looked upon those cardinals, bishops, priests and abbots in any other light. Here, in this house, they sat and consigned John Huss, a great and noble man, who dared to expose and denounce their vices, to the flames. Huss and Jerome of Prague, whom the priestly monsters burnt with him, were the heroes of my boyish imagination; and though the priests burnt their bodies, they could not burn their principles. I sit here and look back and see those cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, abbots and priests, met to settle the *bible* and burn heretics. Yet these were the men who settled the present canon of the bible; who divided it into chapters and verses; who decided what was and what was not to be received as inspiration and of divine authority. These unprincipled men settled what was to be held true and false in doctrine, and right and wrong in practice. This

council claims divine authority for its decisions. I scout and scorn their authority. I am amazed that the decisions of these monsters of iniquity have ever obtained any credit with Christians. But, thanks to the God of love and peace, the decrees of those ecclesiastical councils and legislatures are losing their power. The seizure and murder of Huss and Jerome fixes a stigma on the council of Constance, and should render all their decisions null and void.

“But I am sick and disgusted with such mockery of all that is pure and lovely in ancient and modern times. The ecclesiastical bodies of America and England, composed as they are of *man-stealers* and *man-killers*, are no more entitled to the character of Christian than were the murderers of Huss. Oh that men would come out forever from all connection with these slaveholding and war-making churches. I believe it is a sin to be in them. They are a curse to the world. They stand in the way of truth. They sanction all manner of abominations. They are synagogues of Satan, and no more the church of Christ than are bands of highway robbers, or troops of revengeful savages. They showed me the bible of Huss (as they said), and the hurdle on which he was dragged to the place of execution, and the door of the dungeon in which he was confined. In the old church and in the hall every thing looked gloomy, dark, sad; but the people in the church looked very devout and solemn, while the *priest* performed their religion and their deity for them; for it all seems to me but a poor and wicked attempt to *enact* a God before them. They think not of living and dwelling in a God of love and justice. I felt deeply sad as I stood where Huss was burnt, and reflected on the spirit with which battle-fields, such as Waterloo and Bunker Hill, are visited and commented on. The religion of the sects is of the same spirit that burnt Huss and Jerome. The spirit that leads the supporters of the gallows to plead for the savage principle of blood for blood, is the same that murdered Huss and burnt the Quakers of Boston. Here is another extract from my journal:

“I am now in the market square; the country people flocking in from all quarters, with fruits and vegetables, looking active, sharp, eager—all with a *what-will-you-buy* face. Have just bought some beautiful cherries. The people all seem kind and obliging to one another. The scene is all life and animation, each seeking to sell *dear* or buy *cheap*—each willing to take all he can get for an article. The women here, as in Bregens and Feldkirk, do the marketing, and they are dressed about the head most laughably. I cannot describe it, but there is great high black piece of a blue, green or red crape, or something stiff like it, rising up over each ear, and spread out exactly in the shape of a great butterfly’s wings. The women are active and stirring; the men loiter and stalk solemnly about, with the eternal pipe dangling from their mouths. I love to be in this busy scene; and after all the cheats and frauds and efforts to overreach and deceive, I do believe that there is less iniquity perpetrated in the market than in the old, dark church where I have just been, and where the priests, by their phylacteries and infamous mummery, willingly, and for ambition and avarice, lead the people to perdition. There is more love for humanity, more kindness, more regard for truth and justice in the market, bad as it is, than in the *church*.”

“GENEVA, July 21.

“*Botanic Garden*.—This spot where I now am is replete with most harrowing associations. It occupies the spot on which were perpetrated the butcheries of 1794—about the time of the horrible atrocities of Paris. The blood of many of the first citizens of Geneva was poured out here by a

few ferocious men, acting under the direction of the Paris Committee of Public Safety. Husbands and wives, parents and children, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, were here wantonly butchered by a few assassins, while thousands looked on, disapproving, indeed, but not daring to interfere. It was a reign of terror, but the natural and necessary fruit of the principle taught by Calvin, by the Puritans and by universal Christendom; i. e., that *men may kill one another in defense*. Every man and woman who pleads for a government based on the man-killing principle, pleads for the reign of blood and terror; and when such governments call for their blood they must not wonder nor complain. Roses, pinks and all sorts of sweet and gay flowers, are now blooming on the very spot where those men and women fell victims to the death-dealing power in government. Children are romping and sporting all around me. It is 6 o'clock, P. M., Sunday. Thousands are walking about, taking the fresh air—nurses and mothers with children in their arms, and parents leading their children by the hand. It is a bright, cheerful, happy scene, and in my opinion the people get more good to their souls and bodies walking about here amid these flowers and trees, than they would in the church (into three of which I have looked) hearing and seeing performed and preached an ambitious, man-killing religion. Yea, they had better be busy in the market buying and selling than in a church performing mass, water baptism, communion, singing and preaching, under an impression that, in performing these, they are earning a name to live and die as Christians, while their bosoms are burning with rage, jealousy and revenge, toward their fellow men."

*"July 22—Monday eve, 6 o'clock.*

"On the rampart again to look at Mt. Blanc once more glowing under a clear, glorious sunset. It has been a clear and cloudless day. The town, the gardens, bridges and bastions, are alive with men, women and children. Have had a pleasant and profitable day, chatting and associating with many Englishmen and Americans. Two men are now standing near me, evidently from New England. They have been talking about the political affairs of America, and are now upon the anti-slavery excitement there, and severely commenting on abolitionists as aiming to destroy the political compact of the Union. They are greatly excited. One of them is now giving his experience of German beds—complaining bitterly. Now they talk of men and things in Boston familiar to me. I have joined in the talk and had a great rout about the American constitution. I declared it to be the strong hold of slavery, and that the federal government had been a curse to mankind, and that I should rejoice to see it annulled—the sooner the better for all concerned. They turned and walked off, greatly wrought up in defense of the Union. Soon one came back—found that he was from Boston—that he and wife and child resided in Naples for health. Had heard of Gracenberg and thought of going there, and seemed greatly mollified toward me when he found I had been there and could tell him all about it. We talked over American matters quite coolly and comfortably. Scarce an American do I find, who is pro-slavery, who can travel with comfort in Europe. That nation of slaveholding republicans is a by-word of contempt the world over. May it ever be till it has repented. The last rays of the sun are now lingering around the top of Mt. Blanc. It has now again assumed the cold, rigid hue and look of death. There are little children all about me. One little French child has been sporting about me familiarly, jabbering French. I cannot talk with it much. The child laughs, puts its arms around my neck, climbs upon my back, jumps, runs and romps in good English; and I laugh and

romp in good French—so we understand each other. One thing among the adults and children here has struck me painfully. Many, *very* many, have swellings in their throats—some of them very large. I cannot conceive what is the cause. It looks distressing, but does not seem to give pain.

“*Rosseau* was born in this town—the son of a watchmaker. The house in which he was born is now standing. He exerted a great influence on this town and on France by his writings. His book, the *Emile*, was burnt here in 1762, by the common hangman, by order of the Council of Geneva; and the principal instigators of the act were *Voltaire* and the Council of Sarbonne, who never, in one instance, acted in unison in any thing else. An order was issued for the arrest of the author. His political opinions were deemed to be revolutionary. *Rosseau* became the idol of the people afterward.

“On the south side of the lake, about two miles out of town, is the residence of *Byron*, in 1816, where he wrote ‘*Manfred*’ and the third canto of ‘*Childe Harold*.’ Within the French territory, five miles from Geneva, to the north, is *Ferney*, the residence of *Voltaire*, where he lived from 1759 to 1777. The village of *Ferney* owes its existence to him. He settled there when but six or eight little hovels were in it. He collected industrious colonists, introduced useful manufactures among them, drained and improved his *nine hundred* acres of land, and created around him a flourishing and happy neighborhood. He built a church on which is this inscription: ‘*Deo erexit Voltaire:*’ and once a theater stood opposite the church in which his own tragedies were enacted, probably as much to the good, and far more to the amusement, of the people, than were the prayers, masses and ceremonies that were performed in the church or the religious play-house. The *chateau* in which he lived is standing, but going to decay. Two rooms are yet entire. The curtains of his bed and the furniture are as he left them, except that they have been mutilated by travelers. Some remains of his friends, *Frederick the Great* and *Catharine II* of Russia, still are seen. The Russian empress sent an embassy from Petersburg to *Ferney*, on purpose to compliment the poet. In one room hang portraits—one of his seamstress, one of his servant, a Savoyard boy, and one of *Pope Ganganelli*. In the garden is a long walk closely arched over with honeysuckle, where he used to walk and dictate to his secretary. *Voltaire*, in early life, became an object of deep interest to me, in consequence of my hearing him so oft and so bitterly denounced as an infidel and atheist. To my early imaginings, he stood out from his kind conspicuously wonderful—as *Mt. Blanc* stands out among Alpine glaciers. He seemed to me a human phenomenon; and when I came to read his works, I was surprised to find him feeling, thinking and talking, like other men. What a *bug-bear* has he been made by sectarian churches and their priests, to frighten all from freedom of thought and inquiry into their claims and creeds! Romanism and Protestantism have assailed him with like bitterness. But I wonder there have not been millions of *Voltaires* where there was one. See what was played off before him as Christianity! Look at the churches and ministers, who were called Christian churches and ministers! How could he do otherwise than reject Christianity, while he believed these were its true churches and ministers? Read the history of Calvinism, of Lutherism, of Romanism and Protestantism. See their inhumanity, robberies and murders. If these are the fruits of Christianity, who would be a Christian? But Calvinism, Lutherism, Romanism and Protestantism, as such, have no more affinity in spirit to Christianity than Hindooism or Cannibalism. Had *Voltaire* seen Christianity estab-

lished in the lives of its professed followers, in all its non-resisting, gentle, forgiving, self-forgetting loveliness and beauty, he never would have rejected it. But, taking what he saw in the priests and churches as Christianity, he was obliged to reject it or deny his own nature. The infidelity of Voltaire, Volney, Hume and Gibbon, and the blood and horrors of the French Revolution, are directly chargeable upon the popular churches and priesthood of France and Christianity; for the principles for which they plead, and the spirit which they manifest, necessarily lead to such scenes of governmental violence and anarchy. Their principle is, that *man may be slain to support institutions*, and offered up a victim to *bands and gowns*, to *mitres and crowns*, to *titles and wealth*; and the reign of terror was the natural and necessary fruit of it. In *spirit and practice* Voltaire was nearer the kingdom of heaven than the slavholding clergy of America; far more Christian than the ministers who *convert* (?) the *souls* of men to Christ, and then drag their *bodies* upon a scaffold, and break their necks."

"July 23.

"I have now been in this town and vicinity four days and nights, engaged from four in the morning till eight in the evening, seeing and hearing all that I could; and I have seen and heard about all I wish of it. I have just come in from my last look at Mt. Blanc, the wonder of Europe as to mountain scenery. I have seen it every morning and evening since I have been here. As I looked upon that mountain this evening, my thoughts were led to the spirit empire in which we live. How insignificant seem those mighty glaciers when I enter into the kingdom of my soul and find God enthroned there! The kingdom of this outward world—with its rivers and lakes, its mountains and valleys, its glaciers, its oceans and continents, its impending drapery of suns and stars—is but dust in the balance compared to the beauty and grandeur of that eternal empire of the soul where the Almighty sits enthroned as a God of love. The soul rises above them all, and treads them beneath, as the dust and pavement of that world of glory which is all her own.

"As I sat looking upon the dying glories of Mt. Blanc, the thought came to me that human nature is still most beautiful and lovely, fallen though it be. They say it is *totally* depraved. If it is, it is still full of overflowing affection and sympathy. Under all conditions in which I have ever seen it, it is essentially the same—a kind and loving nature; and I can say, for myself, that I have received a thousand tokens of love from my fellow beings to one of hatred. There is no human being but has a heart to love and be loved. God says to us all—'*My children, love one another*'—and men would be more likely to do so, but for the institutions of society that come in to drive asunder those who should be knit together in love. But the time will come when these religious and political institutions and combinations shall be blotted out, and human hearts be allowed to meet around the world in kindly sympathy. *Nationalism* and *sectarianism* shall no longer measure out human affection by latitude and longitude, and men shall meet and love as men, and not as Christians, or Heathens, or Frenchmen, or Americans. I love human beings, but customs and institutions I heed not, unless I can see that they conduce to human regeneration and redemption. I have been utterly disgusted with the awful reverence paid to institutions in Europe. MAN, with his immortal powers, is regarded as made for the *coat*, and not the coat for man. It seems hopeless, at times, to attempt to change the axioms and principles on which the customs and institutions of mankind are now based; but GOD IS GREAT, and can and will scatter the 'perpetual hills, and cause the everlasting mountains to bow before him.'

“GENEVA, the capital of the canton of Geneva, has nearly 30,000 inhabitants—beautifully located on the western extremity of the lake of Geneva. The river Rhone, as it issues from the lake, divides the town into two parts. On a little island in the river, it is said, there are traces of a tower built by Julius Cæsar to prevent the Helvetians from crossing it. Cæsar, in his Commentaries, giving an account of his wars and conquests in this region and in Germany, makes mention of Geneva as the ‘extreme fortress of the Allabroges, and nearest to the border of Helvetia.’ There is nothing of interest in the buildings, or public works, or appearance of the town. Its sole interest is in its situation and historical associations. This little town, situated on the frontiers of France and Sardinia, and the Italian States of Austria, small and contemptible in itself, has not less than 30,000 strangers pass through it per annum; and it has had a mighty influence on the destinies of many nations. Here, undoubtedly, were first sown the seeds of those political opinions which overthrew the British throne, and brought the head of Charles I to the block; which produced the American Revolution and established the American Republic; which overturned the French monarchy and brought Louis XVI and his queen Antoinette to the guillotine; which produced the reign of terror, overturning the Gælic priesthood and church and aristocracy; laid France at the feet of Napoleon; disturbed, for a time, all the kingdoms of Europe, and sent the world’s conqueror to die a chained victim to the rock of St. Helena. From Geneva went forth the theological dogmas that gave a tone to the religious spirit of Holland, Scotland, Germany, New England and the United States. CALVINISM!—a word of precious and infinite import to some, of unmitigated scorn and loathing to others; embodying, to some, all that is true, just and saving in Christianity—to others, expressive of all that is cruel, intolerant, bloodthirsty, revengeful. Geneva is the home of Calvinism.

“JOHN CALVIN, in 1536, was passing through this town, from Italy to Basle, a fugitive from the pious wrath and fury of the Pope and his cardinals. Farel saw him, persuaded him to remain here; and in two years, by his influence, mainly, the Genevese had abolished Romanism, expelled their bishop and adopted the reformation. Here Calvin lived, and died, aged fifty-five, in 1564, after twenty-four years of uninterrupted and all but supreme power; here he was buried, forbidding the Genevese to mark the spot where he was buried with any monument; and the sight of his grave is not known. Now Calvinism and Calvin are among the things and men that *have been* in Geneva. Geneva, for ages, had groaned beneath the iron sway of the dukes of Savoy. From their bloody sway she was delivered by the reformation, but only to come under the dictatorship of Calvin, not much less severe and bloody. The pulpit of St. Peter’s church, the only building in town worth seeing, built in the 11th century, became the *tribune* and *judgment-seat* of Calvin; and he visited every transgression of his code of morals with most severe and vindictive punishments. He was the president of the Consistory, of whose prominent members one-third were ministers, the rest laymen; and this tribunal had power to inquire into men’s private opinions and acts—and into all family affairs, of whatever rank, and however private. Calvin’s code of sumptuary laws was rigidly executed by the Consistory. By this code, *dinners for ten persons were confined to five dishes, and plush breeches were interdicted; adultery was punished with death; gamblers were exposed to the pillory, with a pack of cards tied round the neck.* Calvin’s influence burnt Servetus at the stake for errors of opinion, though he had not undertaken to propagate those opinions in Geneva, and though he belonged to another nation and had

come to Geneva at Calvin's request. This act of Calvin can admit of no palliation, and it casts a stain upon him and his fellow reformers of Geneva, as great as that which the burning of Huss cast on the Council of Constance. Calvinism burnt Servetus, stabbed the archbishop of St. Andrews, hung the Quakers in Boston, murdered the witches of Salem, and butchered and murdered the women and children of the deceived and plundered Indians of New England. Without discussing the merits of Calvinistic theology, the *spirit* of Calvinism has been one and the same. BLOOD FOR BLOOD is its vengeance-breathing motto. In spirit and practice, Calvinism says, '*Resist evil—vengeance is mine—it is mean and cowardly to forgive—evil for evil—hate, kill and destroy your enemies.*' Calvinism, at this moment, in America and in Europe, is the grand support of the gallows, the sword, gun and cannon, as the great *Christian* means to show love and forgiveness to enemies. The fact cannot be denied. High Calvinism has been and is one of the main pillars of American slavery. Calvinism has ever been found in league with legalized robbery and murder the world over. She did, indeed, do much to emancipate the *mind* of Europe from the blighting, poisoning touch of Popish despotism; but she did as much to chain the souls of her followers to her own bloody car. In *spirit* she is no improvement upon her grim and bloody predecessor. Calvinism was shocked, horrified by theatrical exhibitions in Geneva, and interdicted them by severe penalties; but she could deliver the body of Servetus to the flames without remorse.

"The gates of Geneva (it is a walled town and strongly fortified) are shut at ten o'clock in the evening, and a small toll is demanded of all who enter till midnight, and after that it is doubled. In former times, they were finally closed before midnight; after that none could enter. *Rosseau* was once an apprentice boy in this town. By accident he was outside the walls till after the hour of closing, and could not get in; and, fearing to face his severe master, he fled from his native town. This incident opened to him his career as an author. A brace of *eagles*, huge and ferocious creatures as they are, are maintained here at public expense, as *bears* are in Berne. These are the armorial bearings of Geneva—fit emblems of the spirit of its population when goaded on by sectarianism and nationalism."

H. C. W.

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## LETTER XIII.

PENMAEN, Ohio, January 21th, 1850.

*Dear L.*—In the following extracts from my journal in Basle, I would call special attention to that in reference to Witchcraft. The bible says: "suffer not a witch to live." During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, hundreds of thousands of friendless old men and women were put to death, on the charge of witchcraft, by Catholics and Protestants, all under the sanction of the bible. But, in process of time, humanity against this cruelty triumphed over the bible in favor of it, and then those, who believed in the infallibility of the book, to save its credit, made it conform to the dictates of justice and mercy. So the bible is universally supposed to sanction war and hanging; but when humanity against these outrages, shall have triumphed over the bible in favor of them, as it will,

then, to save the credit of that book, those who hold to its infallibility, will bring it round to the side of love and goodness, and make it assert that war and death-penalty were never sanctioned by God. I call attention to the facts touching the past history of the bible; it has been made to sanction certain outrages, till they became unpopular; and then, rather than admit that the bible is mistaken, they have made it to change its positions, and to condemn the very deeds it once approved. So, the day will come, when men must abandon the doctrine of the infallibility of the bible, or they must prove that it never did sanction war nor capital punishment. Which will they do? The latter I predict. It will be an easier and a more grateful task to the priesthood, to attempt to prove that the bible never lent any sanction to these outrages, than to give up the idea of its plenary inspiration.

BASLE, *Switzerland*, July 26, 1844.

“Basle is the capital of the Canton of Basletown, the last town on the frontier of Switzerland, on the borders of France and Baden. It has about 25,000 inhabitants. Though *politically* belonging to Switzerland, *historically* it is a part of Suabia.

“8 o'clock, *A. M.* *In the Market*.—Never did I see such a scene. Every living thing—men, women and children—horses, mules and dogs—are completely drenched by a powerful thunder storm that has just passed over the city. The market is all an open square—no house, no shelter of any kind—a square, surrounded with high buildings—and the fruit, meat and vegetable stalls all out under the open sky—and such a drenching! Not much dirt on them now, I think. The people all laughing at their own appearance, and all trying to get into the sun, which has burst forth with withering power, to dry themselves. Their nice clean caps, kerchiefs, aprons, and nondescript head and neck ornaments, are in a pretty fix—for four-fifths of the sellers, and most of the buyers, are women and girls. The men move solemnly about, very reverently smoking! But all is good nature. In the market square is a fountain of constantly running fresh water. There are seven such public squares, each having a fountain—most of them as pleasure-walks, and full of fine trees.

“Have been all over the *Rath-haus*, in the marketsquare, built in 1508—a curious old specimen of Burgundian Gothic, and covered with quaint old paintings. Am now sitting on a bench, eating some fine plums and apricots, that I have just bought of a woman for my breakfast, and eat while I write. All about the market are soldiers or armed policemen, to manage the people. The scowling drunkards! Who is to manage them? for they smell strong of the bottle. One of them has just been looking over me, to see what I am writing. I did not speak to him, but kept writing and eating; but he put his face very near me, as my nose could testify. The scottish fellow! But he left me, without deeming it necessary to interfere, as he probably knew not what I am writing. A little child came up as the soldier went away—a neatly dressed little one—put her hands upon my knees, and is now looking at my pencil and book; a happy, pleasant face she has—does not look grim and sour, as did the soldier, nor smell of toddy, as he did. The child is just kicking its feet upon the ground, and patting its hands on my knees, and chattering French at a great rate. I don't know what she says with her *tongue*, but she speaks with her *face* and *eyes*, very plainly, as she looks at my apricots and plums. So I'll just speak a little French to her by sharing them with her. I do love these children, and am glad the world is full of them—and I care not how close they get to me, nor how much they look at my face, or my writing; but I should be satisfied to have these human butchers stand off,



especially when their breath smells like a Scotch Divine's, after pouring down the whisky toddy. All about are the market women, with turnips, potatoes, cabbage, salad, carrots, onions, gay flowers, pears, apricots, cherries, plums, gooseberries—for these all seem to ripen together in this climate. All are busy, buying or selling. They seem to have recovered from the drenching rain, in some measure, though the women's caps and head ornaments droop and draggle, and are any thing but ornamental. I love to linger in these markets, rather than about old churches. I had rather associate and converse with the living, than with the dead. In markets I see human beings as they are; in old cathedrals and monuments, I see them as they have been. It is well to see them in both, to contrast them. The souls of the dead of ages past cluster about those haunts and relics; the souls of the living cluster about these baskets and tubs and stalls of flowers, of apricots and cherries. Communion with the living in a market is more pleasant and useful than communion with the dead in old churches. It is better to live in the present than in the past or future. We cannot benefit the past. The way to benefit the future is to give the mind wholly to the present. As the future becomes the present, let us attend to it; let us think and care nothing for the future, except as it becomes present. The only way to prepare for the future and to avert all its evils, however remote that future, is to give entire attention to a faithful performance of passing duties. Fidelity to the present is the only sure ground of hope for the future; and he that faithfully serves his God, not in holy days, assemblies, rites and ceremonies, but in loving men with an all-confiding, all-hoping, all-suffering, and all-forgiving love, and gives himself to the promotion of their welfare, may, with dauntless heart and fearless step, walk down into the *eternal* future, for underneath him will be the 'Everlasting Arm.' If ministers would cease to humbug the world about the past and future, and call the attention of mankind to the events, maxims, and human beings and doings of the present—war, slavery, drunkenness and man's dominion over man, would soon cease. Salvation from *present* SIN, not from *future* MISERY, would be more aimed at. Efforts and desires after present holiness, and conformity to Christ, would supersede all concern about a future heaven or hell.

"So much for the busy market of Basle. Enough *heresy* for one place, as the clergy would probably say. It may be heresy to them—but truth according to Him who said—Why take thought for the future? The future shall take thought for itself. Sufficient for the present are the business and duty thereof."

"*Stork Hotel*.—I came in from my wanderings about town at 10 o'clock, A. M.—packed up my things, and paid my bill for a start at 3, P. M., down the Rhine per railway to Strasburgh. Here I now sit in my room, by a huge open window, looking down into an open square, around which the hotel is built. In the center of the square is a pretty pond, or basin, of pure water, like that in our own Franklin square in Philadelphia. On the edge of it stands a long, red-legged, gaunt-bodied, long-headed, web-footed, solemn-looking *stork*. He looks very solemn and devout, but he is looking after the loaves and *fishes*—as slaveholding ministers look awfully down upon those under the pulpit. They are indeed looking after the souls and bodies of men, but only to make merchandise of them—as the stork looks after the fish. Have just been down into the square and plucked two leaves from an orange tree growing by the fount. The stork looked at me, as if he doubted whether I had any business there.

"I have spent an hour, since I sat here, reading a short account of WITCHCRAFT, that horrible delusion that, within the past three hundred

years, has brought hundreds of thousands of poor old men and women (chiefly women) to the stake. This monstrous superstition has been sustained and spread by the Catholic and Protestant clergy. In 1484, Pope Innocent charged all his priests, bishops, inquisitors and cardinals, to hunt out and destroy all guilty of witchcraft. A villain called *Sprenger* had the execution of this commission in Switzerland, and all over continental Europe. A regular form of trial for suspected witches, called the *Mallet* or *Sledge Hammer*, was instituted. In 1494, Pope Alexander VI—in 1521, Pope Leo X—and in 1522, Pope Adrian VI—enforced the same edict, each adding severity and malignity to the spirit and practice of his predecessor. It was the settled belief, that when the devil (for he was the reputed author of all) entered into a compact with any one, he imprinted a mark on the body of the person. To find the mark was the great point to which legislation gave attention. The poor victims of this emphatically clerical delusion were stripped and shaved, and pinched and pricked, and sometimes *flayed* in different parts of the body, to find the devil's mark. If any felt a sudden illness, or suffered any misfortune in the family, or if a sudden storm arose, and did injury by land or sea, or if herds and flocks sickened and died, it was all the result of witchcraft. Immediately the *dunce* or *knave* of a priest was called in, some old woman accused, and the priest undertook to pray the devil away. In Constance, a tempest of thunder and lightning arose, in 1482, and destroyed the corn. Two old bed-ridden women were accused of having raised the storm. To be saved from the torture, they confessed, and were solemnly and *prayerfully* burnt; for all those burnings of witches, like the modern hangings and battles, were done with *clerical* prayers—not with *Christian*, or heaven-inspired prayer. In one town, the people were most all swept off by famine and plague. It was said that a poor old woman, buried not long before, was devouring her winding-sheet, and that the disease would not be stayed till she had eaten it all up. At the instigation of the priests, the grave was opened, and it was found she had eaten one-half of her winding-sheet. One of the priests seized a sword, cut off her head, and threw it into a ditch. This stayed the plague, and brought plenty to the people! In 1515, five hundred witches were burnt in three months in Geneva, the home of Calvinism; and in France, many thousands. From 1610 to 1660 was the crowning epoch of witch trials and executions. Catholic and Protestant priests vied with each other in finding out the devil's mark, and in burning all on whom it was found. Had the people possessed sense and courage to look into the hearts of these holy (?) deceivers, they would have found the devil's marks there, in abundance, and without trouble. Over 100,000 were tortured and burnt to death for witchcraft in Germany. 4,000 in Scotland; and 30,000 in England, according to Barrington, were burnt to death for witchcraft! With this dreadful commentary on the death-dealing power in the hand of man, the clergy of the present day will plead for the gallows and the sword! I pray God to enable me to unmask these man-killing priests. They are not, they cannot be, ministers of Him who came not to destroy, but to save men's lives. If they will uphold the gallows, let us try to persuade the people not to uphold them. One old writer mentions twelve ways in which witches bewitch and torment men. 'By way of invocations and imprecations—by sending imps to cross their way, to jostle, affront, bark, howl, bite, or scratch—by glaring at them—by giving them ill turns—by earth, air, fire and water.' 'But who can tell,' he exclaims, 'all the ways of a witch's working; that works not only darkly and closely, but variously and versatily, as God will permit, the devil can suggest, or the malicious hag devise?' What popular delu-

sion or wickedness, robbery or murder, ever existed, which did not find its principal supporters among the priesthood? They cry, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' when it is popular to do so.

"The day is not distant when war, slavery, hanging, spirit dealing, and governments of violence and blood, will be regarded as witchcraft is now viewed. One can but wish that, for the honor of human nature, this delusion had never been. He who would advocate stoning, burning, hanging or drowning, witches at the present time, would be ranked with highway robbers and murderers. Yet the very men who would now think it murder to hang a witch, say it is Christian and very proper to thrust a sword or shoot a bullet through a man who refuses to slaughter innocent men, women and children, at the bidding of his employers, or for feeding and comforting his enemies.

"The old sumptuary laws of Basle were very minute and severe. On Sunday, all were obliged to dress in black to go to meeting. Black was considered peculiarly appropriate to the sabbath and the meeting-house. Another provision was, that no female was allowed to have her hair dressed by men—though women might dress men's hair. No carriage was allowed to enter the town after 10 at night. Footmen were forbidden to be placed behind a carriage. The censors of the city were to decide how many dishes and wines individuals might have at a dinner party; and their authority was supreme as to the quality and cut of clothes for men and women. These laws remind me of the sumptuary laws of the Puritans in Boston and Plymouth, who counted it a great sin to wear long hair, to stay at home or travel on Sunday; but who could, with exultation, murder the innocent Quakers and Indians." H. C. W.

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## LETTER XIV.

PENMAEN, *Ohio, January, 30, 1850.*

*Dear L.*—It is now over two years since I parted with thee in the West Riding of York-hire, amid the sweet scenery of Wharfedale. That parting will never be forgotten. Oceans may roll and continents may stretch between us, but human affections and sympathies may meet and mingle around the world, else would earth be a desolate place, when those who fondly love part to meet no more in this state. I can scarcely persuade myself that I have spent five years of my life in Europe, so absorbed was I, while there, in agitating against war, slavery, and other social evils; and so entirely have I been occupied in the work of agitation against similar, but, if possible, more terrible social wrongs, in this country, since my return in 1847.

The American Republic rushes to its destiny, and will soon be numbered with the things that were. Thank God! Every lover of liberty and friend of humanity should exult over the prospect of the speedy termination of its hypocritical and inhuman career. The actual end of its existence has been, to enslave and slaughter men. Great will be its fall, and as it descends into the tomb of nations, it will shake the earth. From its foundation, it has stood before the world, as A PRACTICAL LIE. Read the following letter to her mother from a young girl now confined in a

slave prison, waiting to be sold to those horrors to which one-sixth of the females of this entire nation are doomed. Her owner puts her price at EIGHTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS, and says—“*she is the most beautiful woman in the country.*”

“ALEXANDRIA, January 22, 1850.

“*My Dear Mother*—I take this opportunity of writing to you a few lines, to inform you, that I am in *Bruin's jail*, and aunt Sally and all of her children, and aunt Hagar and all of her children and grand-children, are almost crazy. My dear mother, will you please to come on as soon as you can? I expect to go away very shortly. O, mother, my dear mother, come now and see your distressed and heart-broken daughter once more! Mother, my dear mother! do not forsake me, for I feel desolate. Please to come now.

Your daughter,

EMILY RUSSELL.

P. S. If you do not come to Alexandria, come as far as Washington and do what you can.”

Mark! It is the government of the United States that seizes and imprisons that daughter and sells her to prostitution, under the eyes of the national capital; since, but for that government, slavery had been abolished long ago. The anguish of millions of such desolate hearts appeal to the God of justice against this republic. To every female heart the cry of anguish comes from this victim of American Republicanism and Religion—“DO NOT FORSAKE ME, FOR I FEEL DESOLATE!” Thus human beings are victimized to this government, and to what this nation worships as God. But I will continue the extracts from my journal as I passed from Basle down the Rhine. I went by railway from Basle to Strasburgh.

“STRASBURGH, July 27, 6 o'clock A. M.

“*The Cathedral*.—I come here to see the people at their *religious* devotions. Am sitting in a corner, close to the altar. Within ten feet of me, the priest, in a white robe, ornamented all over the back and front with pink, yellow and flaming red silk cord, with a long, long trail upon the carpet steps or platform, and behind him, on the lower step, is a boy in devotional regimentals, with a bell. The priest bobs and bows, and mutters, first to the altar, now to the people—and the boy rings the bell to let the people know when they must bob, bow, and disfigure their faces, and hang their heads like a bulrush. Men and women, rich and poor, are coming and going, kneeling and crossing. Some in the pew slips or seats—some kneeling on chairs, some on stools, but most on the dirty, stone floor. All, of every age, sex and condition, as they enter the door, cast a furtive, side-long, solemn, *holy* look toward the priest and altar, bow and cross, and then approach a large basin full of *holy* water, and give a *holy* dip of the finger into it, and cross the breast and forehead. There are several altars with lighted candles on them, *holy* candles and *holy* priests at them, in different parts of the cathedral. The *holy* bells in the tower, consecrated by the Pope, are tolling, calling the town to mass. The priest near me is now giving the *holy* wafer, or bits of paste, to the people kneeling about the altar. The clattering of feet, as the people go and come, the muttering of the *holy* priests, as they gabble over their *holy* incantations in Latin, the coughing, sneezing, and conking—for people do these things in the *holy* houses of Europe as well as in America—echo strangely and confusedly through the lofty aisles and dome. Here and there, around the spacious building, not less than fifteen confessional boxes—*holy*, of course—in each of which is a priest, shut in, and on the outside are people on their knees, confessing their sins through a little hole in the

box, into the priest's *holy* ear, which is close to the hole on the inside. These confessionals are the secret of priestly power and dominion on the continent. Close to me is a very fat woman, on her knees, toiling at her religious devotions. Now, as the bell of the boy rings, she clasps her hands, and turns up her solemn countenance, rolls up her eyes, draws down her mouth, and makes up a very *holy* face. There, now, that same woman thrusts her arms into a deep pocket tied around her body, and draws out an enormous snuff box, takes a pinch of snuff, and then thrusts the box back again into the pocket. Now she hastily folds her hands, still on her knees, turns up her face, and rolls up her eyes with more fervor and awfulness than ever, as if her devotions had received a powerful stimulus from the tobacco. This reminds me of the tobacco-chewing ministers in the United States. Chewing tobacco and spitting out the juice constitute a very important part of their pulpit exercise—as essential a part of their *worship* as praying and preaching. The filthiness of the pulpit of those tobacco-chewing ministers! But clean enough to advocate a filthy religion that enslaves, hangs and shoots men. Now the priest that was performing when I entered, has gone off the stage, and another, similarly decked, has entered, and is performing. Like actors on the stage, they take turns, about half an hour to each performer. A boy came in with him holding his trail, and the little urchin performs his part of the *worship* (as it is called) to admiration, looking round upon the people, smiling and nodding. The curly-headed rogue! There comes a man, with a huge wand in his hand, and a broad sword-belt over his shoulder, and a sword dangling at his side, to help the priest. This is called *devotion!—worship!* This is called Christianity! I look on it all as delusion; otherwise I would not speak of their worship so contemptuously. As works of art, these temples are well enough; but when, by some priestly mummery, they are dedicated to the Holy One, and called God's *holy* houses, and are associated with Christianity, my soul spurns them and all the solemn farces that are enacted in them.

“I have now been all over the cathedral—its crypt, its *high* altar, its organ loft, its marble pulpit, all covered over with apostles, dragons, saints, warriors, friars, angels, devils, popes and imps, beautifully carved in the marble. Hideous, hissing serpents, too, are carved on it. What decorations for a place professing to be consecrated to love and forgiveness! But just adapted to the religion that is actually performed there. I am now near a confessional box; it looks exactly like one of the watch-houses or boxes on the corner of the streets in Philadelphia. A priest is shut into it—nothing of him visible, except his knees—and there is a little hole, out of which he can look upon the people. There he sits at his ease. Down at one side of the box is kneeling a woman. Her mouth close to the hole that opens to the priest's ear; she holds a handkerchief up at each side of her face to prevent the secrets which she is pouring into the priest's ear from reaching the ears of others. The poor woman may be sincere, but I believe the priest is a hypocrite. But with all these hateful abominations of the mass, the confessional, the bowings and cringings, it is not a whit more disgusting to me than are the slaveholding and war-making religion of America and England—a religion which keeps its *Sabbaths* holy, builds and consecrates its temples, performs its devotions, its stated worship, and steals, enslaves and murders men! In human love would I hide my life; but into the bloody secrets of the popular religion of Christendom, my soul, enter thou not! The tower of this cathedral is 474 feet high above the pavement—the highest in the world—24 feet higher than the great Pyramid of Egypt; 140 higher than the tower of St. Paul's in

London. The designer of this tower was Erwin of Steinbach, who died in 1318. The tower was completed in 1439. Part of this cathedral was built in 1015. The choir is said to have been built in the time of Charlemagne. Inside, the most curious specimens of art are the painted windows, the pulpit, and the gigantic *Horologue*, or clock, the most wonderful piece of mechanism, probably, in the world. The entire tower, from the pavement to the pinnacle, is of open net-work of stone. From the top of it is a fine view of the Black Forest in Germany, and the Vosges mountains in France, and the valley of the Rhine, up and down, to a great distance. One window in the building is 48 feet wide, and 230 feet high.

"9 o'clock. Market Square. From the *religious* devotions to the *market* devotions! From the *temple* worship to the *market* worship! The people look a great deal more natural, kindly and humane where I now am, than they did in that cathedral. Their present performances will, at least, benefit human beings—furnish food and clothing to the hungry and naked; but their performances in the church were of no use to any one; they were like the performances of the priests and pharisees of old. In the market I see men and women and children; in the church it is hard to say what I saw, for they were dreadfully disfigured. How do people get the idea that a solemn, awful look, and silent, stealthy tread, a rolling up of eyes, are in themselves more pleasing to the divine Being than a cheerful look, a happy, laughing face, a joyous, bounding step, and an active exertion of the body and mind in buying and selling? But God, it is said, is not in men's minds in the *market*. True. Why? Because they are made to think that Sunday and the church are set apart to worship God, and to think of him. The influence of God upon their minds is felt only while in the church. God is not in the market, but in the church: he is not in week days, but in the Sabbath. Consequently men are *theists* only on Sunday, and in the church; and on other days and in other places, in the market, on 'change, in the legislative hall, in the court house, in the committee room of a bank or railway corporation, they are *atheists*. I mean as I say. The professed ministers of religion in America are theists only when in the church, at the communion, and on the Sabbath. In Congress, in the legislature, on 'change, and in the banking and railway committees, they are *atheists*. They acknowledge a God in the church—they deny him in Congress and in the market. How else can they make merchandise of men, make laws to enslave them, and declare war? Whatever a man professes and prays and preaches with his lips, his real faith is known *only* by his works and the spirit which he manifests toward men in his daily life. It is striking to see the difference between the manners of the people in this market and that of Hamburgh or Vienna. This is a French town, and though on the frontier, the people look, speak, move about in French. More life, more stir and bustle, than in German towns. It is a mixed town, of stiff, heavy German manners, and lively, prattling French."

H. C. W.



**ANTHROPOLOGY;**

OR THE

**SCIENCE OF MAN:**

IN ITS

**Bearing on War and Slavery,**

AND ON ARGUMENTS FROM

THE BIBLE MARRIAGE, GOD, DEATH, RETRIBUTION, ATONE-  
MENT AND GOVERNMENT, IN SUPPORT OF THESE  
AND OTHER SOCIAL WRONGS;

IN

**A SERIES OF LETTERS**

TO A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

~~~~~  
**BY HENRY C. WRIGHT.**  
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